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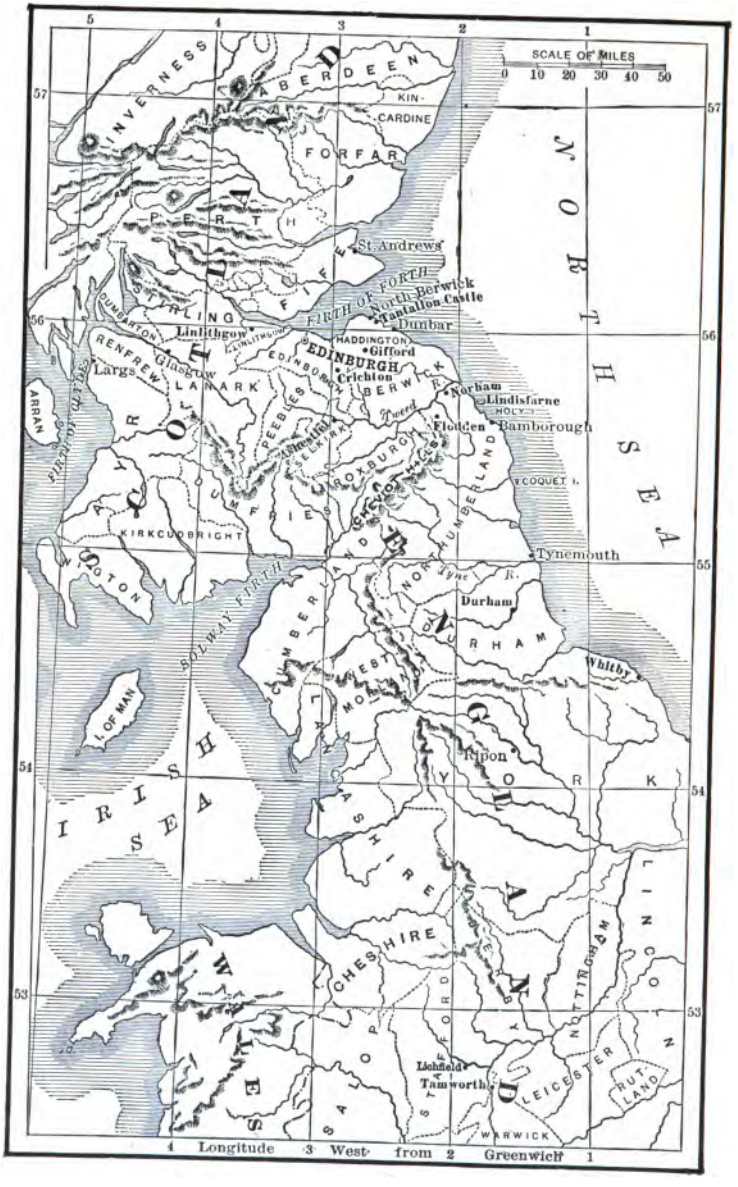
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MARMION:

A TALE OF FLODDEN FIELD.

BY

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

WITH NOTES BY

D. H. M.

BOSTON, U.S.A.:
PUBLISHED BY GINN & COMPANY.
1897.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

THE publishers have availed themselves, by permission, of Dr. William J. Rolfe's carefully restored text of Marmion. The notes are, in every case, the result of independent research; but the editor desires to acknowledge his indebtedness to Dr. Rolfe's excellent edition of the poem for valuable suggestions. He is also under obligations to Mr. Thomas Davidson, of New York City, for much interesting information respecting Scottish words and customs.

D. H. M.

LIFE OF WALTER SCOTT.

ABRIDGED FROM HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

BY EDWIN GINN.

WALTER SCOTT, my father, was born in 1729, and educated to the profession of a Writer to the Signet.[1] I was born, as I believe, on the 15th August, 1771. I showed every sign of health and strength until I was about eighteen months old. One night, I have been often told, I showed great reluctance to be caught and put to bed; and after being chased about the room, was apprehended and consigned to my dormitory with some difficulty. It was the last time I was to show such personal agility. In the morning, I was discovered to be affected with the fever which often accompanies the cutting of large teeth. It held me three days. On the fourth, when they went to bathe me as usual, they discovered that I had lost the power of my right leg. My grandfather, an excellent anatomist as well as physician, the late worthy Alexander Wood, and many others of the most respectable of the faculty, were consulted. There appeared to be no dislocation or sprain; blisters and other topical remedies were applied in vain. The advice of my grandfather, Dr. Rutherford, that I should be sent to reside in the country, to give the chance of natural exertion, excited by free air and liberty, was first resorted to; and before I have the recollection of the slightest event, I was, agreeably to this friendly counsel, an inmate in the farm-house of Sandy-Knowe.

[1] An Edinburgh solicitor.

It is here at Sandy-Knowe, in the residence of my paternal grandfather, already mentioned, that I have the first consciousness of existence.

My grandmother, in whose youth the old Border depredations were matter of recent tradition, used to tell me many a tale of Watt of Harden, Wight Willie of Aikwood, Jamie Telfer of the fair Dodhead, and other heroes — merrymen all of the persuasion and calling of Robin Hood and Little John. Two or three old books which lay in the window-seat were explored for my amusement in the tedious winter-days. *Automathes*, and Ramsay's *Tea-table Miscellany*, were my favorites, although at a later period an odd volume of Josephus's *Wars of the Jews* divided my partiality.

My kind and affectionate aunt, Miss Janet Scott, whose memory will ever be dear to me, used to read these works to me with admirable patience, until I could repeat long passages by heart. The ballad of Hardyknute I was early master of, to the great annoyance of almost our only visitor, the worthy clergyman of the parish, Dr. Duncan, who had not patience to have a sober chat interrupted by my shouting forth this ditty. Methinks I now see his tall, thin, emaciated figure, his legs cased in clasped gambadoes, and his face of a length that would have rivalled the Knight of La Mancha's, and hear him exclaiming, "One may as well speak in the mouth of a cannon as where that child is."

I was in my fourth year when my father was advised that the Bath waters might be of some advantage to my lameness. My affectionate aunt, although such a journey promised to a person of her retired habits anything but pleasure or amusement, undertook as readily to accompany me to the wells of Bladud as if she had expected all the delight that ever the prospect of a watering-place held out to its most impatient visitants. My health was by this time a good deal confirmed by the country air and the influence of that imperceptible

and unfatiguing exercise to which the good sense of my grandfather had subjected me; for, when the day was fine, I was usually carried out and laid down beside the old shepherd, among the crags or rocks round which he fed his sheep. The impatience of a child soon inclined me to struggle with my infirmity, and I began by degrees to stand, to walk, and to run. Although the limb affected was much shrunk and contracted, my general health, which was of more importance, was much strengthened by being frequently in the open air; and, in a word, I, who in a city had probably been condemned to hopeless and helpless decrepitude, was now a healthy, high-spirited, and, my lameness apart, a sturdy child.

During my residence at Bath I acquired the rudiments of reading, at a day-school kept by an old dame near our lodgings, and I had never a more regular teacher, although I think I did not attend her a quarter of a year. An occasional lesson from my aunt supplied the rest. Afterwards, when grown a big boy, I had a few lessons from Mr. Stalker of Edinburgh, and finally from the Rev. Mr. Cleeve. But I never acquired a just pronunciation, nor could I read with much propriety.

The most delightful recollections of Bath are dated after the arrival of my uncle, Captain Robert Scott, who introduced me to all the little amusements which suited my age, and, above all, to the theatre. The play was *As You Like It;* and the witchery of the whole scene is alive in my mind at this moment. I made, I believe, noise more than enough, and remember being so much scandalized at the quarrel between Orlando and his brother, in the first scene, that I screamed out, "A'n't they brothers?" A few weeks' residence at home convinced me, who had till then been an only child in the house of my grandfather, that a quarrel between brothers was a very natural event.

After being a year at Bath, I returned first to Edinburgh, and afterwards for a season to Sandy-Knowe; — and thus the time whiled away till about my eighth year, when it was thought sea-bathing might be of service to my lameness.

For this purpose, still under my aunt's protection, I remained some weeks at Prestonpans, — a circumstance not worth mentioning, excepting to record my juvenile intimacy with an old military veteran, Dalgetty by name, who had pitched his tent in that little village, after all his campaigns, subsisting upon an ensign's half-pay, though called by courtesy a Captain. As this old gentleman, who had been in all the German wars, found very few to listen to his tales of military feats, he formed a sort of alliance with me, and I used invariably to attend him for the pleasure of hearing those communications. Sometimes our conversation turned on the American war, which was then raging. It was about the time of Burgoyne's unfortunate expedition, to which my Captain and I augured different conclusions. Somebody had shown me a map of North America, and, struck with the rugged appearance of the country, and the quantity of lakes, I expressed some doubts on the subject of the General's arriving safely at the end of his journey, which were very indignantly refuted by the Captain. The news of the Saratoga disaster, while it gave me a little triumph, rather shook my intimacy with the veteran.

Besides this veteran, I found another ally at Prestonpans in the person of George Constable, an old friend of my father's. He was the first person who told me about Falstaff and Hotspur, and other characters in Shakespeare. What idea I annexed to them I know not, but I must have annexed some, for I remember quite well being interested in the subject. Indeed, I rather suspect that children derive impulses of a powerful and important kind in hearing

things which they cannot entirely comprehend; and, therefore, that to write *down* to children's understanding is a mistake: set them on the scent, and let them puzzle it out.

From Prestonpans I was transported back to my father's house in George's Square, which continued to be my most established place of residence, until my marriage in 1797. I felt the change, from being a single indulged brat to becoming a member of a large family, very severely; for, under the gentle government of my kind grandmother, who was meekness itself, and of my aunt, who, though of an higher temper, was exceedingly attached to me, I had acquired a degree of license which could not be permitted in a large family. I had sense enough, however, to bend my temper to my new circumstances; but, such was the agony which I internally experienced, that I have guarded against nothing more, in the education of my own family, than against their acquiring habits of self-willed caprice and domination. I found much consolation, during this period of mortification, in the partiality of my mother. She joined to a light and happy temper of mind a strong turn to study poetry and works of imagination.

My lameness and my solitary habits had made me a tolerable reader, and my hours of leisure were usually spent in reading aloud to my mother Pope's translation of Homer, which, excepting a few traditionary ballads, and the songs in Allan Ramsay's *Evergreen*, was the first poetry which I perused. My mother had good natural taste and great feeling: she used to make me pause upon those passages which expressed generous and worthy sentiments, and, if she could not divert me from those which were descriptive of battle and tumult, she contrived at least to divide my attention between them. My own enthusiasm, however, was chiefly awakened by the wonderful and the terrible — the common taste of children, but in which I have remained a child even

unto this day. I got by heart, not as a task, but almost without intending it, the passages with which I was most pleased, and used to recite them aloud, both when alone and to others — more willingly, however, in my hours of solitude, for I had observed some auditors smile, and I dreaded ridicule at that time of life more than I have ever done since.

In [1778] I was sent to the second class of the Grammar School, or High School of Edinburgh, then taught by Mr. Luke Fraser, a good Latin scholar and a very worthy man. Though I had received, with my brothers, in private, lessons of Latin from Mr. James French, now minister of the Kirk of Scotland, I was nevertheless rather behind the class in which I was placed both in years and in progress. This was a real disadvantage, and one to which a boy of lively temper and talents ought to be as little exposed as one who might be less expected to make up his lee-way, as it is called. The situation has the unfortunate effect of reconciling a boy of the former character (which in a posthumous work I may claim for my own) to holding a subordinate station among his class-fellows — to which he would otherwise affix disgrace. There is also, from the constitution of the High School, a certain danger not sufficiently attended to. The boys take precedence in their *places*, as they are called, according to their merit, and it requires a long while, in general, before even a clever boy, if he falls behind the class, or is put into one for which he is not quite ready, can force his way to the situation which his abilities really entitle him to hold. But, in the meantime, he is necessarily led to be the associate and companion of those inferior spirits with whom he is placed; for the system of precedence, though it does not limit the general intercourse among the boys, has nevertheless the effect of throwing them into clubs and coteries, according to the vicinity of the seats they hold. A boy of good talents, therefore, placed even for a time among

his inferiors, especially if they be also his elders, learns to participate in their pursuits and objects of ambition, which are usually very distinct from the acquisition of learning; and it will be well if he does not also imitate them in that indifference which is contented with bustling over a lesson so as to avoid punishment, without affecting superiority or aiming at reward. It was probably owing to this circumstance, that, although at a more advanced period of life I have enjoyed considerable facility in acquiring language, I did not make any great figure at the High School; or, at least, any exertions which I made were desultory and little to be depended on.

Our class contained some very excellent scholars. As for myself, I glanced like a meteor from one end of the class to the other, and commonly disgusted my kind master as much by negligence and frivolity as I occasionally pleased him by flashes of intellect and talent. Among my companions my good-nature and a flow of ready imagination rendered me very popular. Boys are uncommonly just in their feelings, and at least equally generous. My lameness, and the efforts which I made to supply that disadvantage, by making up in address what I wanted in activity, engaged the latter principle in my favor; and in the winter play-hours, when hard exercise was impossible, my tales used to assemble an admiring audience round Lucky Brown's fireside, and happy was he that could sit next to the inexhaustible narrator. I was also, though often negligent of my own task, always ready to assist my friends; and hence I had a little party of staunch partisans and adherents, stout of hand and heart, though somewhat dull of head, — the very tools for raising a hero to eminence. So, on the whole, I made a brighter figure in the *yards* than in the *class*.

After having been three years under Mr. Fraser, our class was, in the usual routine of the school, turned over to Dr.

Adam, the Rector. It was from this respectable man that I first learned the value of the knowledge I had hitherto considered only as a burdensome task. It was the fashion to remain two years at his class, where we read Cæsar and Livy and Sallust, in prose; Virgil, Horace, and Terence, in verse. I had by this time mastered, in some degree, the difficulties of the language, and began to be sensible of its beauties. This was really gathering grapes from thistles; nor shall I soon forget the swelling of my little pride when the Rector pronounced, that though many of my school-fellows understood the Latin better, *Gualterus Scott* was behind few in following and enjoying the author's meaning. Thus encouraged, I distinguished myself by some attempts at poetical versions from Horace and Virgil. Dr. Adam used to invite his scholars to such essays, but never made them tasks. I gained some distinction upon these occasions, and the Rector in future took much notice of me; and his judicious mixture of censure and praise went far to counterbalance my habits of indolence and inattention. I saw I was expected to do well, and I was piqued in honor to vindicate my master's favorable opinion. I climbed, therefore, to the first form; and, though I never made a first-rate Latinist, my school-fellows, and what was of more consequence, I myself, considered that I had a character for learning to maintain.

From Dr. Adam's class I should, according to the usual routine, have proceeded immediately to college. But, fortunately, I was not yet to lose, by a total dismission from constraint, the acquaintance with the Latin which I had acquired. My health had become rather delicate from rapid growth, and my father was easily persuaded to allow me to spend half a year at Kelso with my kind aunt, Miss Janet Scott, whose inmate I again became. It was hardly worth mentioning that I had frequently visited her during our short vacations.

In the meanwhile my acquaintance with English literature was gradually extending itself. In the intervals of my school hours I had always perused with avidity such books of history or poetry or voyages and travels as chance presented to me, — not forgetting the usual, or rather ten times the usual, quantity of fairy tales, eastern stories, romances, etc. These studies were totally unregulated and undirected. My tutor thought it almost a sin to open a profane play or poem; and my mother, besides that she might be in some degree trammelled by the religious scruples which he suggested, had no longer the opportunity to hear me read poetry as formerly. I found, however, in her dressing-room (where I slept at one time) some odd volumes of Shakespeare; nor can I easily forget the rapture with which I sate up in my shirt reading them by the light of a fire in her apartment, until the bustle of the family rising from supper warned me it was time to creep back to my bed, where I was supposed to have been safely deposited since nine o'clock. Chance, however, threw in my way a poetical preceptor. This was no other than the excellent and benevolent Dr. Blacklock, well-known at that time as a literary character. I know not how I attracted his attention, and that of some of the young men who boarded in his family; but so it was that I became a frequent and favored guest. The kind old man opened to me the stores of his library, and through his recommendation I became intimate with Ossian and Spenser. I was delighted with both yet I think chiefly with the latter poet. The tawdry repetitions of the Ossianic phraseology disgusted me rather sooner than might have been expected from my age. But Spenser I could have read forever. Too young to trouble myself about the allegory, I considered all the knights and ladies and dragons and giants in their outward and exoteric sense, and God only knows how delighted I was to

find myself in such society. As I had always a wonderful facility in retaining in my memory whatever verses pleased me, the quantity of Spenser's stanzas which I could repeat was really marvellous. But this memory of mine was a very fickle ally, and has through my whole life acted merely upon its own capricious motion, and might have enabled me to adopt old Beattie of Meikledale's answer, when complimented by a certain reverend divine on the strength of the same faculty: "No, sir," answered the old Borderer, "I have no command of my memory. It only retains what hits my fancy; and probably, sir, if you were to preach to me for two hours, I would not be able when you finished to remember a word you had been saying." My memory was precisely of the same kind: it seldom failed to preserve most tenaciously a favorite passage of poetry, a play-house ditty, or, above all, a Border-raid ballad; but names, dates, and the other technicalities of history escaped me in a most melancholy degree. The philosophy of history, a much more important subject, was also a sealed book at this period of my life; but I gradually assembled much of what was striking and picturesque in historical narrative; and when, in riper years, I attended more to the deduction of general principles, I was furnished with a powerful host of examples in illustration of them. I was, in short, like an ignorant gamester, who kept up a good hand until he knew how to play it.

I left the High School, therefore, with a great quantity of general information, ill arranged, indeed, and collected without system; yet deeply impressed upon my mind; readily assorted by my power of connection and memory, and gilded, if I may be permitted to say so, by a vivid and active imagination. If my studies were not under any direction at Edinburgh, in the country, it may be well imagined, they were less so. A respectable subscription

library, a circulating library of ancient standing, and some private book-shelves, were open to my random perusal, and I waded into the stream like a blind man into a ford, without the power of searching my way, unless by groping for it. My appetite for books was as ample and indiscriminating as it was indefatigable, and I since have had too frequently reason to repent that few ever read so much, and to so little purpose.

Among the valuable acquisitions I made about this time, was an acquaintance with Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered.* But, above all, I then first became acquainted with Bishop Percy's *Reliques of Ancient Poetry.* I remember well the spot where I read these volumes for the first time. It was beneath a hugh platanus-tree, in the ruins of what had been intended for an old-fashioned arbor in the *garden* I have mentioned. The summer-day sped onward so fast, that, notwithstanding the sharp appetite of thirteen, I forgot the hour of dinner, was sought for with anxiety, and was still found entranced in my intellectual banquet. To read and to remember was in this instance the same thing, and henceforth I overwhelmed my school-fellows, and all who would hearken to me, with tragical recitations from the ballads of Bishop Percy. The first time, too, I could scrape a few shillings togéther, which were not common occurrences with me, I bought unto myself a copy of these beloved volumes; nor do I believe I ever read a book half so frequently, or with half the enthusiasm. About this period also I became acquainted with the works of Richardson, and those of Mackenzie, with Fielding, Smollet, and some others of our best novelists.

To this period also I can trace distinctly the awaking of that delightful feeling for the beauties of natural objects which has never since deserted me. The neighborhood of Kelso, the most beautiful, if not the most romantic

village in Scotland, is eminently calculated to awaken these ideas.

From this time the love of natural beauty, more especially when combined with ancient ruins, or remains of our fathers' piety or splendor, became with me an insatiable passion, which, if circumstances had permitted, I would willingly have gratified by travelling over half the globe.

If, however, it should ever fall to the lot of youth to peruse these pages — let such a reader remember, that it is with the deepest regret that I recollect in my manhood the opportunities of learning which I neglected in my youth; that through every part of my literary career I have felt pinched and hampered by my own ignorance; and that I would at this moment give half the reputation I have had the good fortune to acquire, if by doing so I could rest the remaining part upon a sound foundation of learning and science.

LIFE OF SCOTT.

ABRIDGED MAINLY FROM LOCKHART AND HUTTON.

AS Scott grew up, entered the classes of the college, and began his legal studies, first as apprentice to his father, and then in the law classes of the University, he became noticeable to all his friends for his gigantic memory and the rich stores of romantic material with which it was loaded.

His reading was almost all in the direction of military exploit, or romance and mediæval legend and the later border songs of his own country. He learned Italian and read Ariosto. Later he learned Spanish and devoured Cervantes, whose "*novelas*," he said, "first inspired him with the ambition to excel in fiction"; and all that he read and admired he remembered.

It might be supposed that, with these romantic tastes, Scott could scarcely have made much of a lawyer, though the inference would, I believe, be quite mistaken. His father, however, reproached him with being better fitted for a pedler than a lawyer, —so persistently did he trudge over all the neighboring counties in search of the beauties of nature and the historic associations of battle, siege, or legend.

In spite of all this love of excitement, Scott became a sound lawyer, and might have been a great one, had not his pride of character, the impatience of his genius, and the stir of his imagination rendered him indisposed to wait and

slave in the precise manner which the prepossessions of solicitors appoint.

He continued to practise at the bar — nominally at least — for fourteen years, but the life of literature and the life of the bar hardly ever suit, and in Scott's case they suited the less, that he felt himself likely to be a dictator in the one field, and only a postulant in the other. Literature was a far greater gainer by his choice than law could have been a loser. For his capacity for the law he shared with thousands of able men, his capacity for literature with few or none.

Love and Marriage.

One Sunday, about two years before his call to the bar, Scott offered his umbrella to a young lady of much beauty who was coming out of the Greyfriars Church during a shower; the umbrella was graciously accepted; and it was not an unprecedented consequence that Scott fell in love with the borrower, who turned out to be Margaret, daughter of Sir John and Lady Jane Stuart Belches, of Ivernay. For near six years after this, Scott indulged the hope of marrying this lady, and it does not seem doubtful that the lady herself was in part responsible for this impression.

For some reason this strong attachment was broken off. It may have been on account of some disagreement between the young people themselves, but most likely from a difference in the rank of the parties. It was his first and only deep passion, so far as ever can be known to us, and had a great influence on his after life, both in keeping him free from some of the most dangerous temptations in life during his youth, and in creating in him an interior world of dreams and recollections, on which his imagination was continually fed.

The pride which was always so notable a feature in Scott probably sustained him through the keen inward pain which

it is very certain from a great many of his own words that he must have suffered in this uprooting of his most passionate hopes. And it was in part probably the same pride which led him to form, within the year, a new tie — his engagement to Mademoiselle Charpentier, or Miss Carpenter, as she was usually called, — the daughter of a French royalist of Lyons who had died early in the revolution.

She made on the whole a very good wife, only one to be protected by him from every care, and not one to share Scott's deeper anxieties or to participate in his dreams.

Border Minstrelsy and Maturer Poems.

Ever since his earliest college days Scott had been collecting, in those excursions of his into Liddesdale and elsewhere, materials for a book on *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border;* and the publication of this work, in January, 1802, was his first great literary success. The whole edition of eight hundred copies was sold within the year, while the skill and care which Scott had devoted to the historical illustration of the ballads, and the force and spirit of his own new ballads, written in imitation of the old, gained him at once a very high literary name. And the name was well deserved.

Scott's genius flowered late. It was not until he was already thirty-one years of age that he wrote the first canto of his first great romance in verse, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel.* Jeffrey says of the three poems: "*The Lay,* if I may venture to state the creed now established, is, I should say, generally considered as the most natural and original, *Marmion* as the most powerful and splendid, *The Lady of the Lake* as the most interesting, romantic, picturesque, and graceful of his great poems."

It is in painting those moods and exploits, in relation to which Scott shares most completely the feelings of ordinary

men, but experiences them with far greater strength and purity than ordinary men, that he triumphs as a poet.

His romance is like his native scenery, — bold, bare, and rugged, with a swift, deep stream of strong, pure feeling running through it. There is plenty of color in his pictures, as there is on the Scotch hills when the heather is out. And so, too, there is plenty of intensity in his romantic situations; but it is the intensity of simple, natural, unsophisticated, hardy, and manly characters.

Partnership with the Ballantyne Brothers.

Before proceeding further with Scott's life, it may be well to mention briefly his commercial relations with the Ballantyne Brothers, which had such an important bearing on the rest of his life.

About the year 1805, before he had any idea of the gains he might derive from his writings, and while his income from other sources was very limited, he formally, but secretly, entered into the printing business as a partner with his old schoolmate, James Ballantyne.

Although Ballantyne kept his accounts in a loose way, he otherwise managed the business fairly well; and it might have proved a good investment had not Scott soon after, in order to furnish work to the printing-office, engaged in the publishing and book-selling business with John Ballantyne.

Great risks attend this business, requiring good financial ability, a large acquaintance with men, sound judgment, and close application; yet Scott selected a frivolous man of pleasure, with neither character nor capacity, as a partner, relying probably on his own judgment for managing the publishing-house. For such a task he was wholly unfitted. Because he was fond of antiquarian and historical researches, he supposed the people were eager for such reading; and

because some of his friends desired to write unsalable books, he could not refuse to publish them. It is not sufficient for a publisher to ascertain that the book offered is a good one, but he must know whether it is so well adapted to the times and the wants of the community as to command a reasonable sale.

Besides the firm's making so many bad investments, John Ballantyne was squandering its money in dissipation, so that Scott was kept in constant fear of bankruptcy all through the years 1813 and 1814; and it was not until the publication of *Waverley*, opening up the richest vein in his own genius and popularity, that these alarms were ended.

So great was the success of this novel that the leading publishers were very eager to purchase a share in it and subsequent issues. Constable, of Edinburgh, secured the works, but on condition that he should buy also a large part of the worthless stock of John Ballantyne & Co. This sale enabled Scott to wind up that unfortunate enterprise fairly well, although the printing house of James Ballantyne & Co. still held some of their notes, and Constable, on whom he was depending for money to extend his estate, build his castle, and pay his other expenses, was seriously crippled by the purchase of all this unsalable stock.

The Waverley Novels.

In the summer of 1814, Scott took up again and completed — almost at a single heat — a fragment of a Jacobite story begun in 1805 and then laid aside. It was published anonymously, and its astonishing success turned back again the scales of Scott's fortunes, already inclining ominously towards a catastrophe. This story was *Waverley*.

Scott's method of composition was always the same; and, when writing an imaginative work, the rate of progress

seems to have been pretty even, depending much more on the absence of disturbing engagements than on any mental irregularity. The morning was always his brightest time; but morning or evening, in country or in town, well or ill, writing with his own pen or dictating to an amanuensis in the intervals of screaming-fits due to the torture of cramp in the stomach, Scott spun away at his imaginative web almost as evenly as a silkworm spins at its golden cocoon.

In the fourteen most effective years of Scott's literary life, during which he wrote twenty-three novels besides shorter tales, the best stories appear to have been on the whole the most rapidly written, probably because they took the strongest hold of the author's imagination.

But though, to our larger experience, Scott's achievement, in respect of mere fertility, is by no means the miracle which it once seemed, I do not think one of his successors can compare with him for a moment in the ease and truth with which he painted, not merely the life of his own time and country — seldom indeed that of precisely his own time, — but that of days long past, and often too of scenes far distant. The most powerful of all his stories, *Old Mortality*, was the story of a period more than a century and a quarter before he wrote; and others — which, though inferior to this in force, are nevertheless, when compared with the so-called historical romances of any other English writer, what sunlight is to moonlight, if you can say as much for the latter as to admit even that comparison — go back to the period of the Tudors, that is, two centuries and a half. *Quentin Durward* runs back farther still, far into the previous century, while *Ivanhoe* and *The Talisman* carry us back more than five hundred years.

The most striking feature of Scott's romances is that, for the most part, they are pivoted on public rather than mere

private interests and passions. With but few exceptions — (*The Antiquary, St. Ronan's Well,* and *Guy Mannering* are the most important) — Scott's novels give us an imaginative view, not of mere individuals, but of individuals as they are affected by the public strifes and social divisions of the age. No man can read Scott without being more of a public man.

Scott in Adversity.

With the year 1825 came a financial crisis, and Constable began to tremble for his solvency. From the date of his baronetcy (1820), Sir Walter had launched out into a considerable increase of expenditure. He got plans on a rather large scale in 1821 for the extension of Abbotsford, which were all carried out. To meet his expenses in this and other ways he received Constable's notes for "four unnamed works of fiction," of which he had not written a line.

Nor were the obligations he incurred on his own account, and that of his family, the only ones by which he was burdened. He was always incurring expenses, often heavy expenses, for other people. Such obligations, however, would have been nothing when compared with Sir Walter's means, had all his notes on Constable been duly honored, and had not the printing firm of Ballantyne and Co. been so deeply involved with Constable's house that it necessarily became insolvent when he stopped. Taken altogether, I believe that Sir Walter earned during his own lifetime at least £140,000 by his literary work alone, probably more; while even on his land and building combined he did not apparently spend more than half that sum.

Thus even his loss of the price of several novels by Constable's failure would not seriously have compromised Scott's position, but for his share in the printing-house, which fell

with Constable, and the obligations of which amounted to £117,000.

As Scott had always forestalled his income, — spending the purchase-money of his poems and novels before they were written, — such a failure as this, at the age of fifty-five, when all the freshness of his youth was gone out of him, when he saw his son's prospects blighted as well as his own, and knew perfectly that James Ballantyne, unassisted by him, could never hope to pay any fraction of the debt worth mentioning, would have been paralyzing, had he not been a man of iron nerve, and of a pride and courage hardly ever equalled. Domestic calamity, too, was not far off. For two years he had been watching the failure of his wife's health with increasing anxiety, and, as calamities seldom come single, her illness took a most serious form at the very time when the blow fell, and she died within four months of the failure. Nay, Scott was himself unwell at the critical moment, and was taking sedatives which discomposed his brain.

And this was Scott's preparation for his failure, and the bold resolve which followed it, — to work for his creditors as he had worked for himself, and to pay off, if possible, the whole £117,000 by his own literary exertions.

His estate was conveyed to trustees for the benefit of his creditors till such time as he should pay off Ballantyne and Co.'s debt, which of course in his lifetime he never did. Yet between January, 1826, and January, 1828, he earned for his creditors very nearly £40,000. *Woodstock* sold for £8228, "a matchless sale," as Sir Walter remarked, "for less than three month's work." Had Sir Walter's health lasted, he world have redeemed his obligations on behalf of Ballantyne and Co. within eight or nine years at most from the time of his failure. But what is more remarkable still is that after his health failed he struggled on with little more than half

a brain, but a whole will, to work while it was yet day, though the evening was dropping fast.

Not only did he row much harder against the stream of fortune than he had ever rowed with it, but, what required still more resolution, he fought on against the growing conviction that his imagination would not kindle, as it used to do, to its old heat.

He struggled on even to the end, and did not consent to try the experiment of a voyage and visit to Italy till his immediate work was done. But the rest came too late. So intense and continuous had been his application to work that even his very robust constitution was so completely exhausted that it was no longer able to repair the ravages of disease. He spent several months abroad, visiting Malta, Naples, Rome, Venice, and other places of interest, without improvement. He intended to visit Goethe, but the death of the great author at this time changed his plans, increasing his desire for an immediate return home. He sank rapidly, becoming quite unconscious during the latter part of the homeward journey, until his eye caught the towers of Abbotsford, when he sprang up with a cry of delight. Mr. Laidlaw, a dear friend, was waiting for him, and he met him with a cry, "Ha! Willie Laidlaw. O, man, how often I have thought of you!" His dogs came round his chair, and began to fawn on him and lick his hands, while Sir Walter smiled or sobbed over them. The next morning he was wheeled about his garden, and on the following morning was out in this way for a couple of hours; within a day or two he fancied that he could write again, but on taking the pen into his hand his fingers could not clasp it, and he sank back with tears rolling down his cheek. Later, when Laidlaw said in his hearing that Sir Walter had had a little repose, he replied, "No, Willie; no repose for Sir Walter but in the grave." As the tears rushed from his eyes, his old pride

revived. "Friends," he said, "don't let me expose myself; get me to bed, — that is the only place." A few days afterwards, awaking conscious and composed, he desired to see his son-in-law. "Lockhart," he said, "I may have but a minute to speak to you. My dear, be a good man, — be virtuous, — be religious, — be a good man. Nothing else will give you any comfort when you come to lie here." He paused, and Lockhart said, "Shall I send for Sophia and Anne?" "No," said he, "don't disturb them. Poor souls! I know they were up all night. God bless you all!" With this he sank into a very tranquil sleep, and, indeed, he scarcely afterwards gave any sign of consciousness. He died Sept. 21, 1832, sixty-one years and one month old.

Well might Lord Chief Baron Shepherd apply to Scott Cicero's description of some contemporary of his own, who "had borne adversity wisely, who had not been broken by fortune, and who, amidst the buffets of fate, had maintained his dignity." There was in Sir Walter, I think, at least as much of the Stoic as the Christian. But Stoic or Christian, he was a hero of the old indomitable type. Even the last fragments of his imaginative power were all turned to account by that unconquerable will, amidst the discouragement of friends, and the still more disheartening doubts of his own mind. Like the headland stemming a rough sea, he was gradually worn away, but never crushed.

Sir Walter certainly left his "name unstained," unless the serious mistakes natural to a sanguine temperament such as his are to be counted as stains upon his name; and if they are, where among the sons of men would you find many unstained names as noble as his with such a stain upon it? He was not only sensitively honorable in motive, but, when he found what evil his sanguine temper had worked, he used his gigantic powers to repair it, and, as a result of these almost superhuman efforts, within fifteen

years after Sir Walter's death, the debt was at last, through the value of the copyrights he had left behind him, finally extinguished, and the small estate of Abbotsford left cleared. Sir Walter's effort to found a new house was even less successful than the effort to endow it.

The only direct descendant of Sir Walter Scott is now Mary Monica Hope-Scott, who was born on the 2d October, 1852, the grandchild of Mrs. Lockhart, and the great-grandchild of the founder of Abbotsford.

EXTRACTS FROM LOCKHART'S LIFE OF SCOTT.

"I AM drawing near to the close of my career; I am fast shuffling off the stage. I have been perhaps the most voluminous author of the day; and it *is* a comfort to me to think that I have tried to unsettle no man's faith, to corrupt no man's principle."

In the social relations of life, where men are most effectually tried, no spot can be detected in him. He was a patient, dutiful, reverent son; a generous, compassionate, tender husband; an honest, careful, and most affectionate father. Never was a more virtuous or a happier fireside than his. The influence of his mighty genius shadowed it imperceptibly; his calm good sense, and his angelic sweetness of heart and temper, regulated and softened a strict but paternal discipline. His children, as they grew up, understood by degrees the high privilege of their birth; but the profoundest sense of his greatness never disturbed their confidence in his goodness.

Perhaps the most touching evidence of the lasting tenderness of his early domestic feelings was exhibited to his executors, when they opened his repositories in search of

his testament, the evening after his burial. On lifting up his desk, we found arranged in careful order a series of little objects, which had obviously been so placed there that his eye might rest on them every morning before he began his tasks. These were the old-fashioned boxes that had garnished his mother's toilet, when he, a sickly child, slept in her dressing-room; the silver taper-stand which the young advocate had bought for her with his first five-guinea fee; a row of small packets inscribed with her hand, and containing the hair of those of her offspring that had died before her; his father's snuff-box and etui-case; and more things of the like sort, recalling the "old familiar faces." The same feeling was apparent in all the arrangement of his private apartment. Pictures of his father and mother were the only ones in his dressing-room. The clumsy antique cabinets that stood there, things of a very different class from the beautiful and costly productions in the public rooms below, had all belonged to the furniture of George's Square. Even his father's rickety washing-stand, with all its cramped appurtenances, though exceedingly unlike what a man of his very scrupulous habits would have selected in these days, kept its ground. The whole place seemed fitted up like a little chapel of the Lares.

Such a son and parent could hardly fail in any of the other social relations. No man was a firmer or more indefatigable friend. I knew not that he ever lost one; and a few, with whom, during the energetic middle stage of life, from political differences or other accidental circumstances, he lived less familiarly, had all gathered round him, and renewed the full warmth of early affection in his later days. There was enough to dignify the connection in their eyes, but nothing to chill it on either side. The imagination that so completely mastered him, when he chose to give her the

rein, was kept under most determined control when any of the positive obligations of active life came into question. A high and pure sense of duty presided over whatever he had to do as a citizen and a magistrate; and, as a landlord, he considered his estate as an extension of his hearth.

But his moral, political, and religious character has sufficiently impressed itself upon the great body of his writings. He is indeed one of the few great authors of modern Europe who stand acquitted of having written a line that ought to have embittered the bed of death. His works teach the practical lessons of morality and Christianity in the most captivating form — unobtrusively and unaffectedly.

The race that grew up under the influence of that intellect can hardly be expected to appreciate fully their own obligations to it: and yet, if we consider what were the tendencies of the minds and works that, but for his, must have been unrivalled in the power and opportunity to mould young ideas, we may picture to ourselves in some measure the magnitude of the debt we owe to a perpetual succession, through thirty years, of publications unapproached in charm, and all instilling a high and healthy code; a bracing, invigorating spirit; a contempt of mean passions, whether vindictive or voluptuous; humane charity, as distinct from moral laxity as from unsympathizing austerity; sagacity too deep for cynicism, and tenderness never degenerating into sentimentality: animated throughout in thought, opinion, feeling, and style, by one and the same pure energetic principle — a pith and savor of manhood; appealing to whatever is good and loyal in our natures, and rebuking whatever is low and selfish.

I have no doubt that, the more details of his personal history are revealed and studied, the more powerfully will that be found to inculcate the same great lessons with his

works. Where else shall we be taught better how prosperity may be extended by beneficence, and adversity confronted by exertion? Where can we see the "follies of the wise" more strikingly rebuked, and a character more beautifully purified and exalted in the passage through affliction to death?

MARMION.[1]

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO FIRST.

To WILLIAM STEWART ROSE, Esq.[2]

Ashestiel, Ettrick Forest.[3]

NOVEMBER'S sky is chill and drear,
November's leaf is red and sear:[4]
Late, gazing down the steepy linn[5]

[1] **Marmion**: the name of an imaginary English hero who was killed at the great battle of Flodden, 1513, in the war between Scotland and England.

Scott represents Marmion — whose name he borrows from a noble English family — as sent by Henry VIII. of England as an ambassador to James IV. of Scotland. He makes his journey shortly before hostilities begin; his object being to learn —

"Why through all Scotland, near and far,
Their king is mustering troops for war."
(See Canto I., xx.)

The true cause of the Scottish invasion of England, on which the poet has based his story of *Marmion*, must be sought in the natural ambition

[2] **William Stewart Rose, Esq.**: a Scottish poet, and a friend of Sir Walter Scott's; born 1775, died 1843. He translated the old French romances of *Amadis de Gaul* and *Partenopex de Blois*, to which Scott refers at the close of this Introduction (see p. 17); but his literary reputation now rests mainly on his excellent translation of the *Orlando Furioso*, by the Italian poet, Ariosto.

[3] **Ashestiel**: the name of Scott's residence on the bank of the Tweed (see map). He lived there in 1806, when he began *Marmion*, which he published two years later. In 1812, Scott removed to the beautiful estate at Abbotsford, some five or six miles down the river. Scott received a thousand guineas for *Marmion* before he had completed it; and the sale of the poem, before his death, had reached a total of about fifty thousand copies.

[4] **Sear**: withered.

[5] **Linn**: a shrubby ravine, a "narrow glen."

That hems our little garden in,
Low in its dark and narrow glen,
You scarce the rivulet might ken,[1]

of the two rival kingdoms, each of which was resolved to gain all the power and territory it could at the expense of the other.

In the summer of 1513, Henry became involved in a war with France, England's old enemy. The French king, in retaliation for the humiliating defeat which he suffered, stirred up the Scots — long the allies of France — to cross the border, and, by attacking the English in Northumberland, compel, if possible, Henry to return to protect his northern shires from seizure and pillage. Henry, however, delegated the defence of his dominions to the Earl of Surrey, who marched with thirty thousand men to meet James at the head of about the same number.

The Scottish king took his position on Flodden Hill, a long, high ridge in Northumberland, formed by an easterly spur of the range of Cheviot Hills, which at that point constitutes the boundary between England and Scotland.

Between Flodden height and Surrey's forces flowed the deep river of the Till, a tributary of the Tweed. The English general crossed the river by Twisel Bridge, near the point where the Till joins the Tweed, and attacked James (September 9th). In the desperate battle which ensued James was defeated and slain, and his army suffered so terribly that "every noble house in Scotland left some of its name on the fatal field."

Surrey, on the other hand, had lost so heavily that he could not follow up the victory and invade the Scottish kingdom. So great, however, was the dread of an attack at Edinburgh * that the inhabitants of that capital began at once to fortify the city with a new, strong wall, some remains of which still exist. But no attack was made; and the next year England and Scotland signed a treaty of peace. Not quite thirty years later, James V. died of grief and disappointment over the shameful defeat of his army in a battle with the English (1542) at Solway Moss. A week before his death, while prostrated by this blow, news was brought to him of the birth of a daughter destined to be crowned in her cradle, and to become the unfortunate Mary Queen of Scots. The king believed that there was nothing auspicious in the birth of a princess at such a time; and in speaking of the crown, he said, "It came wi' a lass," — alluding to Marjory Bruce, by whom the Stuart family had obtained the throne, — "and it'll gang wi' a lass." It did not quite do that, for Mary's son, James VI., succeeded her; but in 1603, on the death of Elizabeth of England, Scotland ceased to be an independent realm, and was joined to the larger and richer English kingdom, to which James VI., under the title of James I. of Great Britain, was summoned to take the crown.

[1] **Ken**: see or know.

* See Professor Aytoun's fine poem, *Edinburgh after Flodden*, in *Heroic Ballads* (Ginn & Co.).

So thick the tangled greenwood grew,
So feeble trilled[1] the streamlet through;
Now, murmuring hoarse, and frequent seen
Through bush and brier, no longer green,
An angry brook, it sweeps the glade,
Brawls over rock and wild cascade,
And, foaming brown, with double speed,
Hurries its waters to the Tweed.[2]

No longer autumn's glowing red
Upon our Forest hills is shed;
No more, beneath the evening beam,
Fair Tweed reflects their purple gleam.
Away hath passed the heather-bell[3]
That bloomed so rich on Needpath-fell;[4]
Sallow his brow, and russet bare
Are now the sister-heights of Yair.[5]
The sheep, before the pinching heaven,[6]
To sheltered dale,[7] and down,[8] are driven,
Where yet some faded herbage pines,
And yet a watery sunbeam shines;
In meek despondency they eye
The withered sward and wintry sky,
And far beneath their summer hill
Stray sadly by Glenkinnon's rill.

[1] **Trilled**: gave out a tremulous sound; or the word may be used in the sense of trickled.

[2] **Tweed**: this Scottish river, flowing into the North Sea, forms part of the boundary between northeastern England and Scotland (see map).

[3] **Heather-bell**: the beautiful purple flower of the Scottish heather.

[4] **Needpath-fell**: a "fell" may be either a rocky height or bare high land.

[5] **Yair**: Yair and Needpath-fell are both near Ashestiel.

[6] **Heaven**: weather.

[7] **Dale**: a valley.

[8] **Down**: a hill; but here, rolling land; sheep pasture.

The shepherd shifts his mantle's fold,
And wraps him closer from the cold:
His dogs no merry circles wheel,
But shivering follow at his heel;
A cowering glance they often cast,
As deeper moans the gathering blast.

My imps,[1] though hardy, bold, and wild,
As best befits the mountain child,
Feel the sad influence of the hour,
And wail the daisy's vanished flower,
Their summer gambols tell, and mourn,
And anxious ask, — Will spring return,
And birds and lambs again be gay,
And blossoms clothe the hawthorn spray?

Yes, prattlers, yes. The daisy's flower
Again shall paint your summer bower;
Again the hawthorn shall supply
The garlands you delight to tie;
The lambs upon the lea[2] shall bound,
The wild birds carol to the round;[3]
And while you frolic light as they,
Too short shall seem the summer day.

To mute and to material things
New life revolving summer brings;
The genial call dead Nature hears,
And in her glory reappears.

[1] **Imps**: an old word for children. [2] **Lea**: meadow.
[3] **To the round**: this phrase appears to be used in the musical sense of singing a "round," or of singing in succession.

But oh! my country's wintry state
What second spring shall renovate?
What powerful call shall bid arise
The buried warlike and the wise,
The mind that thought for Britain's weal,[1]
The hand that grasped the victor steel?
The vernal[2] sun new life bestows
Even on the meanest flower that blows;
But vainly, vainly may he shine
Where Glory weeps o'er NELSON'S[3] shrine,
And vainly pierce the solemn gloom
That shrouds, O PITT,[4] thy hallowed tomb!

Deep graved in every British heart,
Oh, never let those names depart!
Say to your sons, — Lo, here his grave
Who victor died on Gadite[5] wave!
To him, as to the burning levin,[6]
Short, bright, resistless course was given;
Where'er his country's foes were found,
Was heard the fated thunder's sound,

[1] **Weal**: welfare.

[2] **Vernal**: belonging to the spring.

[3] **Nelson's shrine**: Lord Nelson (1758–1805) is buried in St. Paul's Cathedral, London. Southey calls him "the greatest naval hero of our own and of all former times."

[4] **Pitt**: William Pitt (1759–1806), second son of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, was an eminent statesman and orator. He was, for many years, prime minister of England; and through his influence, and that of his party, England entered upon the long war with France which ended in the fall of Napoleon.

[5] **Gadite wave**: referring to Trafalgar Bay, off Cadiz (called *Gades* — hence "Gadite" — in classical times). In this bay Nelson received his death-wound, in gaining his great and decisive victory over the French fleet, in 1805.

[6] **Levin**: lightning, thunderbolt.

Till burst the bolt on yonder shore,
Rolled, blazed, destroyed, — and was no more.

Nor mourn ye less his perished worth
Who bade [1] the conqueror [2] go forth,
And launched that thunderbolt of war
On Egypt,[3] Hafnia,[4] Trafalgar;
Who, born to guide such high emprise,[5]
For Britain's weal was early wise;[6]
Alas! to whom the Almighty gave,
For Britain's sins, an early grave!
His worth who, in his mightiest hour,
A bauble held the pride of power,
Spurned at the sordid lust of pelf,[7]
And served his Albion [8] for herself;
Who, when the frantic crowd amain [9]
Strained at subjection's bursting rein,
O'er their wild mood full conquest gained,
The pride, he would not crush, restrained,

[1] **Who bade**: an allusion to Pitt as prime minister.

[2] **The conqueror**: Nelson.

[3] **Egypt**: referring to Nelson's destruction of the French fleet in Aboukir Bay, Egypt, in 1798.

[4] **Hafnia**: the Latin name of Copenhagen. The Danes resisted the manner in which England carried on the war with France; Nelson attacked the Danish fleet at Copenhagen, in 1801, and forced Denmark to take a different course.

[5] **Emprise**: enterprise, undertaking.

[6] **Early wise**: alluding to the fact that Pitt became a power in Parliament before he was twenty-two.

[7] **Pelf**: money, riches.

[8] **Albion**: an old name for England; some authorities have supposed it to refer to the white chalk cliffs of the southeast coast, but the word is now generally thought to be of uncertain meaning.

[9] **Amain**: with might, violently.

Showed their fierce zeal a worthier cause,
And brought the freeman's arm to aid the freeman's laws.

Hadst thou but lived, though stripped of power,
A watchman on the lonely tower,
Thy thrilling trump had roused the land,
When fraud or danger were at hand;
By thee, as by the beacon-light,[1]
Our pilots had kept course aright;
As some proud column, though alone,
Thy strength had propped the tottering throne.
Now is the stately column broke,
The beacon-light is quenched in smoke,
The trumpet's silver sound[2] is still,
The warder[3] silent on the hill!

Oh, think, how to his latest day,
When Death, just hovering, claimed his prey,
With Palinure's[4] unaltered mood,
Firm at his dangerous post he stood,
Each call for needful rest repelled,
With dying hand the rudder held,
Till, in his fall, with fateful[5] sway,[6]
The steerage of the realm gave way!

[1] **Beacon-light**: a signal light.

[2] **Trumpet's silver sound**: alluding to the eloquence of Pitt.

[3] **Warder**: a guard.

[4] **Palinure**: Virgil relates that a messenger from the gods endeavored to persuade Palinurus, the pilot of Æneas, to leave the helm, for needed rest. Palinurus refused, and was pushed headlong into the sea; but he did not let go the helm, and, in falling, carried it with him.

[5] **Fateful**: producing fatal results.

[6] **Sway**: turning aside, divergence.

Then, while on Britain's thousand plains
One unpolluted church remains,
Whose peaceful bells ne'er sent around
The bloody tocsin's [1] maddening sound,
But still, upon the hallowed day,
Convoke the swains [2] to praise and pray;
While faith and civil peace are dear,
Grace this cold marble with a tear,
He who preserved them, PITT, lies here.

Nor yet suppress the generous sigh
Because his rival slumbers nigh,[3]
Nor be thy *requiescat* [4] dumb
Lest it be said o'er FOX'S tomb; [5]
For talents mourn, untimely lost,
When best employed and wanted most;
Mourn genius high, and lore [6] profound,
And wit that loved to play, not wound;
And all the reasoning powers divine,
To penetrate, resolve,[7] combine;
And feelings keen, and fancy's glow,
They sleep with him who sleeps below:
And, if thou mourn'st they could not save
From error him who owns this grave,
Be every harsher thought suppressed,

[1] **Tocsin**: an alarm bell. [2] **Swains**: rustics.

[3] **His rival slumbers nigh**: an allusion to Fox, whose grave is next to Pitt's.

[4] **Requiescat**: "requiescat in pace," may he rest in peace.

[5] **Fox's tomb**: Charles James Fox (1749–1806), was an eminent statesman and orator. He opposed the war waged against France by Pitt, and died while engaged in negotiating a peace with that country.

[6] **Lore**: learning. [7] **Resolve**: analyze.

And sacred be the last long rest.
Here,[1] where the end of earthly things
Lays heroes, patriots, bards,[2] and kings;
Where stiff the hand, and still the tongue,
Of those who fought, and spoke, and sung;
Here, where the fretted[3] aisles[4] prolong
The distant notes of holy song,
As if some angel spoke again,
'All peace on earth, good-will to men;'
If ever from an English heart,
Oh, *here* let prejudice depart,
And, partial feeling cast aside,
Record that Fox a Briton died!
When Europe crouched to France's yoke,[5]
And Austria bent, and Prussia broke,
And the firm Russian's purpose brave
Was bartered by a timorous slave,
Even then dishonor's peace he spurned,
The sullied olive-branch[6] returned,
Stood for his country's glory fast,
And nailed her colors to the mast![7]

[1] **Here**: referring to the graves in Westminster Abbey.

[2] **Bards**: poets.

[3] **Fretted**: ornamental, especially interlaced or perforated ornamental work in architecture.

[4] **Aisles**: the north and south side-divisions of Westminster Abbey (and of churches similarly built), separated from the central portion by lofty columns. Originally these aisles were used as passage-ways for processions in religious services.

[5] **France's yoke**: at the height of his power, Napoleon persuaded or compelled Austria, Prussia, Russia, and other European powers, to aid him in his hostile policy toward England.

[6] **Olive-branch**: the emblem of peace.

[7] **Nailed her colors**: Nelson, on one or more occasions, nailed his battle-flag to the mast, determined to sink rather than haul down his colors and

Heaven, to reward his firmness, gave
A portion in this honored grave,
And ne'er held marble in its trust
Of two such wondrous men the dust.

With more than mortal powers endowed,
How high they soared above the crowd!
Theirs was no common party race,[1]
Jostling by dark intrigue for place;
Like fabled Gods, their mighty war
Shook realms and nations in its jar;
Beneath each banner proud to stand,
Looked up the noblest of the land,
Till through the British world were known
The names of PITT and FOX alone.
Spells[2] of such force no wizard grave
E'er framed in dark Thessalian cave,[3]
Though his could drain the ocean dry,
And force the planets from the sky.
These spells are spent, and, spent with these,
The wine of life is on the lees,[4]
Genius and taste and talent gone,
Forever tombed beneath the stone,
Where — taming thought to human pride! —
The mighty chiefs sleep side by side.
Drop upon FOX's grave the tear,

surrender. Fox is here compared to him in his firm refusal of all offers of a dishonorable peace with France.

[1] **Party race**: political rivalry.

[2] **Spells**: magical verses, charms.

[3] **Thessalian cave**: the witches and wizards of Thessaly were especially noted in classical times.

[4] **Lees**: dregs.

'Twill trickle to his rival's bier;[1]
O'er PITT's the mournful requiem[2] sound,
And FOX's shall the notes rebound.
The solemn echo seems to cry, —
'Here let their discord with them die.
Speak not for those a separate doom
Whom Fate made brothers in the tomb;
But search the land, of living men,
Where wilt thou find their like again?'

Rest, ardent spirits, till the cries
Of dying Nature bid you rise!
Not even your Britain's groans can pierce
The leaden silence of your hearse;[3]
Then, oh, how impotent and vain
This grateful tributary strain!
Though not unmarked from northern clime,
Ye heard the Border Minstrel's[4] rhyme:
His Gothic[5] harp has o'er you rung;
The Bard you deigned to praise, your deathless names has sung.

Stay yet, illusion, stay awhile,
My wildered[6] fancy still beguile!
From this high theme how can I part,
Ere half unloaded is my heart!

[1] **Bier**: here used for tomb (see line 68, p. 5).
[2] **Requiem**: solemn music for the dead.
[3] **Hearse**: here used for coffin — leaden coffins were formerly common.
[4] **Border Minstrel**: Scott calls himself the border minstrel, because he lived on the border between Scotland and England.
[5] **Gothic**: meaning here not classical.
[6] **Wildered**: bewildered.

For all the tears e'er[1] sorrow drew,
And all the raptures fancy knew,
And all the keener rush of blood
That throbs through bard in bardlike mood,
Were here a tribute mean and low,
Though all their mingled streams could flow —
Woe, wonder, and sensation high,
In one spring-tide[2] of ecstasy![3] —
It will not be — it may not last —
The vision of enchantment's past:
Like frostwork in the morning ray,
The fancy fabric melts away;
Each Gothic[4] arch, memorial-stone,
And long, dim, lofty aisle, are gone;
And, lingering last, deception dear,
The choir's high sounds die on my ear.
Now slow return the lonely down,
The silent pastures bleak and brown,
The farm begirt with copsewood[5] wild,
The gambols of each frolic child,
Mixing their shrill cries with the tone
Of Tweed's dark waters rushing on.

Prompt on unequal tasks to run,
Thus Nature disciplines her son:
Meeter,[6] she says, for me to stray,
And waste the solitary day

[1] **E'er**: ever. [2] **Spring-tide**: the highest tide.
[3] **Ecstasy**: any overpowering emotion.
[4] **Gothic**: here used of the Gothic or pointed architecture of the Middle Ages, of which Westminster Abbey is an example.
[5] **Copsewood**: bushes and trees of low growth.
[6] **Meeter**: fitter.

In plucking from yon fen[1] the reed,
And watch it floating down the Tweed,
Or idly list[2] the shrilling lay[3]
With which the milkmaid cheers her way,
Marking its cadence[4] rise and fail,
As from the field, beneath her pail,
She trips it down the uneven dale;
Meeter for me, by yonder cairn,[5]
The ancient shepherd's tale to learn,
Though oft he stop in rustic fear,
Lest his old legends tire the ear
Of one who, in his simple mind,
May boast of book-learned taste refined.

But thou, my friend, canst quickly tell —
For few have read romance so well —
How still the legendary lay
O'er poet's bosom holds its sway;
How on the ancient minstrel strain
Time lays his palsied hand in vain;
And how our hearts at doughty[6] deeds,
By warriors wrought in steely weeds,[7]
Still throb for fear and pity's sake;
As when the Champion of the Lake[8]

[1] **Fen**: a marsh or bog.
[2] **List**: listen to. [3] **Lay**: a song.
[4] **Cadence**: musical measure or rhythm.
[5] **Cairn**: a heap of stones serving as a monument.
[6] **Doughty**: brave.
[7] **Weeds**: clothing, but here used in the sense of armor.
[8] **Champion of the Lake**: Sir Launcelot of the Lake was one of the most renowned of King Arthur's circle of knights, — the "Knights of the Round Table." The romance of King Arthur — a real or legendary king of Britain in the sixth century — forms the subject of Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*.

Enters Morgana's fated house,
Or in the Chapel Perilous,
Despising spells and demons' force,
Holds converse with the unburied corse;
Or when, Dame Ganore's [1] grace to move —
Alas, that lawless was their love! —
He sought proud Tarquin in his den,
And freed full sixty knights; or when,
A sinful man and unconfessed,[2]
He took the Sangreal's [3] holy quest,
And slumbering saw the vision high
He might not view with waking eye.

The mightiest chiefs of British song
Scorned not such legends to prolong.
They gleam through Spenser's elfin [4] dream,
And mix in Milton's heavenly theme;
And Dryden, in immortal strain,
Had raised the Table Round again,
But that a ribald [5] king and court
Bade him toil on, to make them sport;
Demanded for their niggard [6] pay,
Fit for their souls, a looser [7] lay,
Licentious satire, song, and play;

[1] **Dame Ganore**: Guinevere, Arthur's queen.

[2] **Unconfessed**: here, in the sense of not having received divine forgiveness from the Church.

[3] **Sangreal**: the cup from which Christ drank at the Last Supper. The search, or quest, for the Sangreal was undertaken by the Knights of the Round Table, though only the pure in heart and life could hope to find it. See Tennyson's *Sir Galahad, Holy Grail*, and Lowell's *Sir Launfal*.

[4] **Elfin**: fairy; the reference is to Spenser's *Faery Queene*.

[5] **Ribald**: low, vulgar.

[6] **Niggard**: stingy, mean.

[7] **Looser**: laxer in morals.

The world defrauded of the high design,
Profaned the God-given strength, and marred the lofty line.

Warmed by such names, well may we then,
Though dwindled sons of little men,
Essay to break a feeble lance[1]
In the fair fields of old romance;
Or seek the moated[2] castle's cell,
Where long through talisman[3] and spell,
While tyrants ruled and damsels wept,
Thy Genius, Chivalry[4] hath slept.
There sound the harpings of the North,
Till he awake and sally forth,
On venturous quest to prick[5] again,
In all his arms, with all his train,
Shield, lance, and brand,[6] and plume, and scarf,
Fay,[7] giant, dragon, squire,[8] and dwarf,
And wizard with his wand of might,
And errant[9] maid on palfrey[10] white.
Around the Genius weave their spells,
Pure Love, who scarce his passion tells;
Mystery, half veiled and half revealed;
And Honor, with his spotless shield;

[1] **Break a lance**: enter combat.
[2] **Moated**: surrounded by a moat or deep trench for defence.
[3] **Talisman**: a magical charm.
[4] **Chivalry**: Knighthood; the ideal of a Knightly warrior; the Genius of Chivalry, the spirit or guardian power presiding over Knighthood.
[5] **Prick**: spur, ride rapidly.
[6] **Brand**: a sword.
[7] **Fay**: elf, fairy.
[8] **Squire**: an attendant on a Knight.
[9] **Errant**: roving; perhaps an allusion to Una, the heroine of Spenser's *Faery Queene*.
[10] **Palfrey**: here a lady's riding-horse.

Attention, with fixed eye; and Fear,
That loves the tale she shrinks to hear;
And gentle Courtesy; and Faith,
Unchanged by sufferings, time, or death;
And Valor, lion-mettled[1] lord,
Leaning upon his own good sword.

Well has thy fair achievement[2] shown
A worthy meed[3] may thus be won:
Ytene's[4] oaks — beneath whose shade
Their theme the merry minstrels made,
Of Ascapart, and Bevis[5] bold,
And that Red King,[6] who, while of old
Through Boldrewood[7] the chase he led,
By his loved huntsman's arrow bled —
Ytene's oaks have heard again
Renewed such legendary strain;
For thou hast sung, how he of Gaul,
That Amadis[8] so famed in hall,[9]

[1] **Lion-mettled**: having the courage of a lion.

[2] **Achievement**: referring to translations of old heroic romances by William Stewart Rose, the gentleman to whom Scott addressed this Introduction to *Marmion*.

[3] **Meed**: reward, honor.

[4] **Ytene's oaks**: the Royal Forest or Hunting Ground, called the "New Forest," in Hampshire, in the south of England.

[5] **Ascapart and Bevis**: Ascapart was the name of a giant whom Bevis, a famous knight of Southampton, is said, in the old romances, to have conquered.

[6] **Red King**: William Rufus, King of England (1087–1100).

[7] **Boldrewood**: another name for the New Forest. William Rufus was accidentally killed there by an arrow shot by his companion, Sir Walter Tyrrell, his "loved huntsman."

[8] **Amadis**: *Amadis of Gaul* was one of the old romances translated by Mr. Rose, Scott's friend.

[9] **In hall**: in castle hall; that is, among knights gathered in the castle hall.

For Oriana[1] foiled in fight
The necromancer's felon might;
And well in modern verse hast wove
Partenopex's[2] mystic love:
Hear, then, attentive to my lay,
A knightly tale of Albion's elder day.

[1] **Oriana**: the heroine of the romance of *Amadis*.

[2] **Partenopex**: *Partenopex de Blois* was the hero of another romance translated by Mr. Rose.

Canto First.

THE CASTLE.

I.

DAY set on Norham's [1] castled steep,
And Tweed's fair river, broad and deep,
And Cheviot's [2] mountains lone;
The battled [3] towers, the donjon-keep,[4]
The loophole grates where captives weep,
The flanking walls [5] that round it sweep,
In yellow lustre shone.
The warriors on the turrets [6] high,
Moving athwart [7] the evening sky,
Seemed forms of giant height;
Their armor, as it caught the rays,

[1] **Norham**: the remains of Norham castle, an English royal stronghold under the command of Sir Hugh the Heron, are on the southern bank of the Tweed, on the boundary between England and Scotland. Henry VIII. held it as a border fortress at the time when Marmion is represented as visiting it on his way to James IV.'s palace of Holyrood in Edinburgh.

[2] **Cheviot**: the Cheviot Hills; at one point they form the boundary between Scotland and England.

[3] **Battled**: for battlemented; that is, having square notches, or openings, at the top, through which soldiers, guarding the wall, might fire.

[4] **Donjon-keep**: the donjon-keep was a high, square tower, the strongest part of the castle, and the final dependence for keeping the castle against assault. Prisoners were often confined in the lower parts of the donjon, from which the word *dungeon* is derived.

[5] **Flanking walls**: the main walls of the castle, so constructed that they served to protect (by a side or flanking fire) the donjon from attack.

[6] **Turrets**: small towers, often rising from the main walls or the principal towers of a castle.

[7] **Athwart**: across.

Flashed back again the western blaze,
In lines of dazzling light.

II.

Saint George's banner,[1] broad and gay,
Now faded, as the fading ray
Less bright, and less, was flung;
The evening gale had scarce the power
To wave it on the donjon tower,
So heavily it hung.
The scouts had parted[2] on their search,
The castle gates were barred;
Above the gloomy portal arch,
Timing his footsteps to a march,
The warder kept his guard,
Low humming, as he paced along,
Some ancient Border gathering[3] song.

III.

A distant trampling sound he hears;
He looks abroad, and soon appears,
O'er Horncliff-hill,[4] a plump[5] of spears
Beneath a pennon[6] gay;
A horseman, darting from the crowd

[1] **Saint George's banner**: the flag of England, bearing the cross of St. George; St. George being the national saint and hero of England.
[2] **Parted**: departed.
[3] **Border gathering**: a gathering of warriors on the border between England and Scotland; this boundary was a scene of almost constant warfare.
[4] **Horncliff-hill**: a hill near Norham castle.
[5] **Plump**: a cluster.
[6] **Pennon**: a small, pointed flag, usually attached to a spear or lance.

Like lightning from a summer cloud,
Spurs on his mettled courser[1] proud,
Before the dark array.[2]
Beneath the sable palisade[3]
That closed the castle barricade,
His bugle-horn he blew;
The warder hasted from the wall,
And warned the captain in the hall,
For well the blast he knew;
And joyfully that knight did call
To sewer,[4] squire, and seneschal.[5]

IV.

'Now broach[6] ye a pipe[7] of Malvoisie,[8]
Bring pasties[9] of the doe,[10]
And quickly make the entrance free,
And bid my heralds[11] ready be,
And every minstrel sound his glee,[12]
And all our trumpets blow;

[1] **Courser**: a war-horse.
[2] **Array**: troops; that is, Marmion's armed train.
[3] **Palisade**: a fence or fortification formed of large, strong stakes, set upright in the ground.
[4] **Sewer**: an officer who served up and arranged the dishes for the table.
[5] **Seneschal**: a steward; one who had the superintendence of domestic matters, and especially of feasts and ceremonies.
[6] **Broach**: tap. [7] **Pipe**: a very large cask of wine.
[8] **Malvoisie**: a sweet, strong, high-flavored wine, originally from Malvasia, Greece.
[9] **Pasties**: meat-pies, usually made of venison, and highly seasoned.
[10] **Doe**: the female of the deer.
[11] **Heralds**: officers who acted as messengers for persons in high authority.
[12] **Glee**: music, minstrelsy; or the word may be used here for a musical instrument.

And, from the platform, spare ye not
To fire a noble salvo-shot;[1]
  Lord Marmion waits below!'
Then to the castle's lower ward[2]
  Sped forty yeomen[3] tall,
The iron-studded gates unbarred,
Raised the portcullis'[4] ponderous guard,
The lofty palisade unsparred,[5]
  And let the drawbridge fall.

V.

Along the bridge Lord Marmion rode,
Proudly his red-roan charger[6] trode,
His helm[7] hung at the saddle bow;
Well by his visage you might know
He was a stalworth[8] knight and keen,
And had in many a battle been;
The scar on his brown cheek revealed
A token true of Bosworth field;[9]
His eyebrow dark and eye of fire

[1] **Salvo-shot**: a salute, a welcome.

[2] **Ward**: a certain division, or section, of a castle or its grounds.

[3] **Yeomen**: common men, men without rank; here, perhaps, used in sense of retainers or followers.

[4] **Portcullis**: a strong grating, sliding in upright grooves, at the entrance-way of a castle, and used to protect the entrance in case of assault.

[5] **Unsparred**: unbarred.

[6] **Charger**: a war-horse.

[7] **Helm**: helmet.

[8] **Stalworth**: stalwart.

[9] **Bosworth field**: a decisive battle was fought at Bosworth Field, Leicestershire, in 1485, between Richard III. and Henry, Earl of Richmond; Richard was slain; and his vanquisher became King Henry VII., the first of the Tudor monarchs. The battle marks the end of the Wars of the Roses, which had been fatal to so many English knights and noblemen.

Showed spirit proud and prompt to ire;
Yet lines of thought upon his cheek
Did deep design and counsel speak.
His forehead, by his casque[1] worn bare,
His thick moustache and curly hair,
Coal-black, and grizzled here and there,
But more through toil than age;
His square-turned joints and strength of limb,
Showed him no carpet knight[2] so trim,
But in close fight a champion grim,
In camps a leader sage.

VI.

Well was he armed from head to heel,
In mail[3] and plate[4] of Milan steel;
But his strong helm, of mighty cost,
Was all with burnished gold embossed.
Amid the plumage of the crest[5]
A falcon hovered on her nest,
With wings outspread and forward breast;
E'en such a falcon, on his shield,
Soared sable[6] in an azure field:
The golden legend bore aright,
'Who checks[7] at me, to death is dight.'[8]

[1] **Casque**: helmet.
[2] **Carpet knight**: a knight who had seen no military service.
[3] **Mail**: armor made of links of steel, — flexible armor.
[4] **Plate**: armor made of plates of steel riveted together; the armor made at Milan was especially celebrated.
[5] **Crest**: an ornament on the top of the helmet; it served to identify the wearer.
[6] **Sable**, etc.: that is, a black falcon on a blue ground.
[7] **Checks**: attacks.
[8] **Dight**: here, destined.

Blue was the charger's broidered rein;
Blue ribbons decked his arching mane;
The knightly housing's [1] ample fold
Was velvet blue and trapped [2] with gold.

VII.

Behind him rode two gallant squires,
Of noble name and knightly sires:
They burned the gilded spurs [3] to claim,
For well could each a war-horse tame,
Could draw the bow, the sword could sway,
And lightly bear the ring [4] away;
Nor less with courteous precepts stored,
Could dance in hall, and carve at board,
And frame love-ditties passing [5] rare,
And sing them to a lady fair.

VIII.

Four men-at-arms [6] came at their backs,
With halbert,[7] bill,[8] and battle-axe;
They bore Lord Marmion's lance so strong,
And led his sumpter-mules [9] along,
And ambling palfrey, when at need

[1] **Housing**: a covering, or caparison of a horse; it was often highly ornamental.
[2] **Trapped**: ornamented.
[3] **Gilded spurs**: these were the especial badge of knighthood.
[4] **Ring**: one of the favorite exercises, or feats of arms, with the knights was to ride at full speed and catch and bear away a suspended ring on the point of a lance.
[5] **Passing**: surpassingly.
[6] **Men-at-arms**: soldiers fully armed.
[7] **Halbert**: or halberd, a combined axe and spear.
[8] **Bill**: a pike or spear having a broad hook-shaped blade.
[9] **Sumpter-mules**: mules carrying baggage.

Him listed[1] ease his battle-steed.
The last and trustiest of the four
On high his forky pennon bore;
Like swallow's tail in shape and hue,
Fluttered the streamer glossy blue,
Where, blazoned[2] sable, as before,
The towering falcon seemed to soar.
Last, twenty yeomen, two and two,
In hosen[3] black and jerkins[4] blue,
With falcons broidered on each breast,
Attended on their lord's behest.[5]
Each, chosen for an archer good,
Knew hunting-craft by lake or wood;
Each one a six-foot bow could bend,
And far a cloth-yard shaft[6] could send;
Each held a boar-spear tough and strong,
And at their belts their quivers rung.
Their dusty palfreys and array
Showed they had marched a weary way.

IX.

'Tis meet that I should tell you now,
How fairly armed, and ordered how,
The soldiers of the guard,

[1] **Him listed**: he chose to, or was pleased to.
[2] **Blazoned**: depicted, represented.
[3] **Hosen**: coverings for the legs.
[4] **Jerkins**: jackets, or short, close-fitting coats.
[5] **Behest**: command.
[6] **Cloth-yard shaft**: an arrow a yard in length.

With musket, pike, and morion,[1]
To welcome noble Marmion,
  Stood in the castle-yard;
Minstrels and trumpeters were there,
The gunner held his linstock[2] yare,[3]
  For welcome-shot prepared:
Entered the train, and such a clang
As then through all his turrets rang
  Old Norham never heard.

X.

The guards their morrice-pikes[4] advanced,
  The trumpets flourished brave,[5]
The cannon from the ramparts glanced,[6]
  And thundering welcome gave.
A blithe salute, in martial sort,
  The minstrels well might sound,
For, as Lord Marmion crossed the court,
  He scattered angels[7] round.
'Welcome to Norham, Marmion!
  Stout heart and open hand!
Well dost thou brook[8] thy gallant roan,
  Thou flower of English land!'

[1] **Morion**: an open-faced helmet.
[2] **Linstock**: a staff holding a match for firing a cannon.
[3] **Yare**: ready.
[4] **Morrice-pikes**: heavy spears supposed to be of Moorish origin.
[5] **Brave**: bravely, grandly.
[6] **Glanced**: flashed.
[7] **Angels**: English gold coins, worth about $2.50.
[8] **Brook**: manage, control.

XI.

Two pursuivants,[1] whom tabards[2] deck,
With silver scutcheon[3] round their neck,
Stood on the steps of stone
By which you reach the donjon gate,
And there, with herald pomp and state,
They hailed Lord Marmion:
They hailed him Lord of Fontenaye,[4]
Of Lutterward, and Scrivelbaye,
Of Tamworth tower and town;
And he, their courtesy to requite,
Gave them a chain[5] of twelve marks'[6] weight,
All as he lighted down.
'Now, largesse, largesse,[7] Lord Marmion,
Knight of the crest of gold!
A blazoned shield, in battle won,
Ne'er guarded heart so bold.'

[1] **Pursuivants**: attendants on the heralds.

[2] **Tabards**: coats or tunics (with very short sleeves or with none at all), decorated with armorial devices. In Chaucer's time (14th century) the tabard was a plain garment worn commonly by peasants and workingmen; later it came into use as a military garment worn over armor. In the case of a pursuivant or herald it was embroidered with the arms of his lord or of the sovereign.

[3] **Scutcheon**: an escutcheon or shield decorated with a coat of arms.

[4] **Lord of Fontenaye**: Scott here represents Marmion as a descendant and inheritor of a Robert de Marmion, Lord of Fontenay, Normandy, who came to England with William the Conqueror (1066), and received from him a grant of Tamworth, in Staffordshire, and of Scrivelsby, in Lincolnshire. Lutterward is said to be a corruption of Lutterworth, Leicestershire.

[5] **Chain**: a gold chain.

[6] **Marks**: here used, apparently, of certain old coins, worth somewhat more than $3.00.

[7] **Largesse**: a gift; but the expression is here used to acknowledge Marmion's liberality.

XII.

They marshalled him to the castle-hall,
Where the guests stood all aside,
And loudly flourished the trumpet-call,
And the heralds loudly cried, —
'Room, lordlings,[1] room for Lord Marmion,
With the crest and helm of gold!
Full well we know the trophies won
In the lists[2] at Cottiswold:[3]
There, vainly Ralph de Wilton strove
'Gainst Marmion's force to stand;
To him he lost his lady-love,
And to the king his land.
Ourselves beheld the listed field,
A sight both sad and fair;
We saw Lord Marmion pierce his shield,
And saw his saddle bare;
We saw the victor win the crest
He wears with worthy pride,
And on the gibbet-tree,[4] reversed,[5]
His foeman's scutcheon tied.
Place, nobles, for the Falcon-Knight!
Room, room, ye gentles[6] gay,
For him who conquered in the right,
Marmion of Fontenaye!'

[1] **Lordlings**: lesser lords; an expression used here by way of comparison, and out of compliment, to Lord Marmion.

[2] **Lists**: enclosed grounds, for tournaments and knightly feats of arms.

[3] **Cottiswold**: Cotswold, Gloucestershire.

[4] **Gibbet-tree**: the gallows.

[5] **Reversed**: the knight's escutcheon, or shield, was hung upside down as a sign of his conquest.

[6] **Gentles**: persons of good birth; gentlemen.

XIII.

Then stepped, to meet that noble lord,
Sir Hugh the Heron [1] bold,
Baron of Twisell [2] and of Ford,[3]
And Captain of the Hold; [4]
He led Lord Marmion to the deas,[5]
Raised o'er the pavement high,
And placed him in the upper place —
They feasted full and high:
The whiles [6] a Northern harper rude
Chanted a rhyme of deadly feud,[7]
'How the fierce Thirwalls, and Ridleys all,
Stout Willimondswick,
And Hardriding Dick,
And Hughie of Hawdon, and Will o' the Wall,
Have set on Sir Albany Featherstonhaugh,
And taken his life at the Deadman's-shaw.' [8]
Scantly [9] Lord Marmion's ear could brook [10]
The harper's barbarous lay,
Yet much he praised the pains he took,
And well those pains did pay;
For lady's suit and minstrel's strain
By knight should ne'er be heard in vain.

[1] **Sir Hugh the Heron**: Sir Hugh is represented as commander of the castle in behalf of King Henry VIII., who held it as a border fortress.
[2] **Twisell**: near Norham castle.
[3] **Ford**: Ford castle, Northumberland, England, near the boundary.
[4] **Hold**: the stronghold, or castle.
[5] **Deas**: the dais, — an elevated platform, or place of honor, at the farther end of the castle hall.
[6] **The whiles**: while.
[7] **Feud**: quarrel; or a war waged by one family or class upon another.
[8] **Shaw**: a thicket, or small wood.
[9] **Scantly**: scarcely, hardly.
[10] **Brook**: endure.

XIV.

'Now, good Lord Marmion,' Heron says,
'Of your fair courtesy,
I pray you bide some little space
In this poor tower with me.
Here may you keep your arms from rust,
May breathe[1] your war-horse well;
Seldom hath passed a week but joust[2]
Or feat of arms befell.
The Scots can rein a mettled steed,
And love to couch[3] a spear;—
Saint George! a stirring life they lead
That have such neighbors near!
Then stay with us a little space,
Our Northern wars to learn;
I pray you for your lady's grace!'
Lord Marmion's brow grew stern.

XV.

The captain marked his altered look,
And gave the squire the sign;
A mighty wassail-bowl[4] he took,
And crowned[5] it high with wine.

[1] **Breathe**: rest.

[2] **Joust**: a military contest, usually with blunted lances, between mounted knights.

[3] **Couch a spear**: to hold a spear in attitude of attack or defence; hence, to fight.

[4] **Wassail-bowl**: (Anglo-Saxon, *wes hæl*, health be to you) a bowl for drinking wassail,—a mixture of ale with nutmeg, sugar, etc.

[5] **Crowned**: to crown is to fill a cup so that its contents rise a little above the brim.

'Now pledge me here, Lord Marmion;
But first I pray thee fair,
Where hast thou left that page[1] of thine
That used to serve thy cup of wine,
Whose beauty was so rare?
When last in Raby-towers[2] we met,
The boy I closely eyed,
And often marked his cheeks were wet
With tears he fain[3] would hide.
His was no rugged horse-boy's hand,
To burnish shield or sharpen brand,
Or saddle battle-steed,
But meeter seemed for lady fair,
To fan her cheek, or curl her hair,
Or through embroidery, rich and rare,
The slender silk to lead;
His skin was fair, his ringlets gold,
His bosom — when he sighed,
The russet doublet's[4] rugged fold
Could scarce repel its pride!
Say, hast thou given that lovely youth
To serve in lady's bower?[5]
Or was the gentle page, in sooth,[6]
A gentle paramour?'[7]

[1] **Page**: a lad acting as an attendant on a person of rank. Marmion's so-called page, Constance de Beverley, will take a chief and tragic part in Canto II. (See Cantos II., XX.–XXXII.)

[2] **Raby-towers**: Raby Castle, in the county of Durham, England.

[3] **Fain**: gladly, eagerly.

[4] **Doublet**: a close-fitting garment, often of silk, covering the body from the neck to a little below the waist.

[5] **Bower**: originally a dwelling, a cottage; here, a lady's chamber.

[6] **Sooth**: truth.

[7] **Paramour**: lady-love.

XVI.

Lord Marmion ill could brook such jest;
He rolled his kindling eye,
With pain his rising wrath suppressed,
Yet made a calm reply:
'That boy thou thought so goodly fair,
He might not brook the Northern air.
More of his fate if thou wouldst learn,
I left him sick in Lindisfarne.[1]
Enough of him. — But, Heron, say,
Why does thy lovely lady gay
Disdain to grace the hall to-day?
Or has that dame, so fair and sage,
Gone on some pious pilgrimage?' —
He spoke in covert scorn, for fame
Whispered light tales of Heron's dame.

XVII.

Unmarked, at least unrecked,[2] the taunt,
Careless the knight replied:
'No bird whose feathers gayly flaunt
Delights in cage to bide;
Norham is grim and grated close,
Hemmed in by battlement and fosse,[3]
And many a darksome tower,
And better loves my lady bright
To sit in liberty and light

[1] **Lindisfarne**: "an isle on the coast of Northumberland [England] was called *Holy Island*, from the sanctity of its ancient monastery." — SCOTT.
[2] **Unrecked**: unheeded.
[3] **Fosse**: moat, ditch.

In fair Queen Margaret's[1] bower.
We hold our greyhound in our hand,
Our falcon[2] on our glove,
But where shall we find leash[3] or band
For dame that loves to rove?
Let the wild falcon soar her swing,
She'll stoop when she has tired her wing.' —

XVIII.

'Nay, if with Royal James's bride
The lovely Lady Heron bide,
Behold me here a messenger,
Your tender greetings prompt to bear;
For, to the Scottish court[4] addressed,
I journey at our king's behest,
And pray you, of your grace, provide
For me and mine a trusty guide.
I have not ridden in Scotland since
James backed the cause of that mock prince,
Warbeck,[5] that Flemish counterfeit,
Who on the gibbet paid the cheat.
Then did I march with Surrey's power,[6]
What time[7] we razed[8] old Ayton tower.'[9] —

[1] **Queen Margaret**: the queen of James IV. of Scotland.

[2] **Falcon**: the falcon, a bird of the hawk family, was formerly much used for hunting small game; the falcon was held by the huntsman on his wrist or hand.

[3] **Leash**: a cord for holding a dog.

[4] **Scottish court**: the royal court, Holyrood Palace, Edinburgh.

[5] **Warbeck**: Perkin Warbeck — said by Scott to have been a Fleming, or native of Flanders — was an adventurer who pretended to be the younger son of Edward IV. After Henry VII. came to the throne, Warbeck headed an insurrection, and claimed the crown. He was captured, and in 1499 was hanged as a traitor.

[6] **Power**: military force, troops.

[7] **What time**: when.

[8] **Razed**: demolished.

[9] **Ayton tower**: Ayton's castle, in Berwickshire, Scotland.

XIX.

'For such-like need, my lord, I trow,[1]
Norham can find you guides enow;[2]
For here be some have pricked as far
On Scottish ground as to Dunbar,[3]
Have drunk the monks of Saint Bothan's[4] ale,
And driven the beeves[5] of Lauderdale,[6]
Harried[7] the wives[8] of Greenlaw's[9] goods,
And given them light[10] to set their hoods.'—

XX.

'Now, in good sooth,'[11] Lord Marmion cried,
'Were I in warlike wise[12] to ride,
A better guard I would not lack[13]
Than your stout forayers[14] at my back;
But as in form of peace I go,
A friendly messenger, to know,
Why, through all Scotland, near and far,
Their king is mustering troops for war,
The sight of plundering Border spears

[1] **Trow**: think or believe. [2] **Enow**: enough.

[3] **Dunbar**: at the mouth of the Frith of Forth, Scotland, about 30 miles east of Edinburgh.

[4] **Saint Bothan's**: probably St. Bothan's monastery, Scotland, near the border. Of course the English were not very particular to ask the monks' leave before drinking their ale.

[5] **Driven the beeves**: stolen and driven off the cattle.

[6] **Lauderdale**: the valley of the Lauder, a branch of the Tweed.

[7] **Harried**: plundered. [8] **Wives**: women (Scotch).

[9] **Greenlaw**: the capital of Berwickshire, Scotland.

[10] **Given them light**, etc.: that is, enabled them to adjust their hoods or bonnets by the light of their own blazing homes, fired by these marauders.

[11] **In good sooth**: truly. [12] **Wise**: manner.

[13] **Lack**: want. [14] **Forayers**: marauders.

Might justify suspicious fears,
And deadly feud or thirst of spoil
Break out in some unseemly broil.
A herald were my fitting guide;
Or friar[1] sworn in peace to bide;
Or pardoner,[2] or travelling priest,
Or strolling pilgrim,[3] at the least.'

XXI.

The captain mused a little space,
And passed his hand across his face. —
'Fain would I find the guide you want,
But ill may spare a pursuivant,
The only men that safe can ride
Mine errands on the Scottish side:
And though a bishop built this fort,
Few holy brethren here resort;
Even our good chaplain, as I ween,[4]
Since our last siege we have not seen.
The mass[5] he might not sing or say
Upon one stinted meal[6] a-day;
So, safe he sat in Durham aisle,[7]
And prayed for our success the while.

[1] **Friar**: one of an order of monks that lived by begging.

[2] **Pardoner**: one formerly licensed to sell the indulgences, or pardons, issued by the Pope.

[3] **Pilgrim**: one who made religious pilgrimages to the holy places in Jerusalem and other foreign lands.

[4] **Ween**: think, fancy.

[5] **Mass**: the Roman Catholic communion service.

[6] **One stinted meal**: this would seem to mean that, during the siege the occupants of the castle got but one stinted meal, which the chaplain thought hardly sufficient in his case.

[7] **Durham aisle**: Durham cathedral.

Our Norham vicar,[1] woe betide,[2]
Is all too well in case[3] to ride;
The priest of Shoreswood — he could rein
The wildest war-horse in your train,
But then no spearman in the hall
Will sooner swear, or stab, or brawl.
Friar John of Tillmouth were the man;
A blithesome[4] brother at the can,[5]
A welcome guest in hall and bower,[6]
He knows each castle, town, and tower,
In which the wine and ale is good,
'Twixt Newcastle and Holy-Rood.[7]
But that good man, as ill befalls,[8]
Hath seldom left our castle walls,
Since, on the vigil[9] of Saint Bede,[10]
In evil hour he crossed the Tweed,
To teach Dame Alison her creed.
Old Bughtrig found him with his wife,
And John, an enemy to strife,
Sans[11] frock and hood, fled for his life.
The jealous churl[12] hath deeply swore

[1] **Vicar**: a subordinate clergyman or priest.

[2] **Betide**: happen, befall; "woe betide" here apparently used either in the sense of alas, or of *mischief take him!*

[3] **Well in case**: stout, fat.

[4] **Blithesome**: merry, jolly.

[5] **Can**: tankard or cup for ale or wine.

[6] **Hall and bower**: among both men and women.

[7] **Holy-Rood**: Holy-Rood (Holy Cross) Abbey or Palace, Edinburgh.

[8] **Ill befalls**: unfortunately happens.

[9] **Vigil**: religious watching, fasting, and prayer; here observed the night before St. Bede's Day (May 27).

[10] **Saint Bede**: an eminent English monk and historian of the eighth century.

[11] **Sans**: without, destitute of.

[12] **Churl**: (A. S. *ceorl*, a freeman of the lowest rank) a peasant; a coarse, rude fellow.

That, if again he venture o'er,
He shall shrive[1] penitent no more.
Little he loves such risks, I know,
Yet in your guard perchance will go.'

XXII.

Young Selby, at the fair hall-board,
Carved[2] to his uncle and that lord,
And reverently took up the word:
'Kind uncle, woe were we each one,
If harm should hap to brother John.
He is a man of mirthful speech,
Can many a game and gambol teach;
Full well at tables[3] can he play,
And sweep at bowls[4] the stake away.
None can a lustier carol bawl,
The needfullest among us all,
When time hangs heavy in the hall,
And snow comes thick at Christmas tide,[5]
And we can neither hunt nor ride
A foray on the Scottish side.
The vowed revenge of Bughtrig rude
May end in worse than loss of hood.
Let Friar John in safety still
In chimney-corner snore his fill,

[1] **Shrive**: absolve, pardon.
[2] **Carved**: the office of carver was then a position of some honor and importance.
[3] **Tables**: backgammon.
[4] **Bowls**: a game resembling that of tenpins, but played on a level plat of green-sward.
[5] **Tide**: time, season.

Roast hissing crabs,[1] or flagons[2] swill;
Last night, to Norham there came one
Will better guide Lord Marmion.' —
'Nephew,' quoth Heron, 'by my fay,[3]
Well hast thou spoke; say forth thy say.' —

XXIII.

'Here is a holy Palmer[4] come,
From Salem[5] first, and last from Rome;
One that hath kissed the blessed tomb,[6]
And visited each holy shrine[7]
In Araby and Palestine;
On hills of Armenie[8] hath been,
Where Noah's ark may yet be seen;
By that Red Sea, too, hath he trod,
Which parted at the Prophet's rod;[9]
In Sinai's wilderness he saw
The Mount where Israel heard the law,
Mid thunder-dint,[10] and flashing levin,
And shadows, mists, and darkness, given.
He shows Saint James's cockle-shell,[11]

[1] **Crabs**: crab apples.

[2] **Flagons**: table-vessels for holding ale or liquor; they have a handle, spout, and cover.

[3] **Fay**: faith.

[4] **Palmer**: the Palmer was a pilgrim, says Scott, who spent his entire time in visiting holy places, travelling incessantly, and living on charity. Such pilgrims often wore a branch of palm in their hats, to show that they had been in Jerusalem.

[5] **Salem**: Jerusalem.

[6] **Blessed tomb**: the tomb of Christ.

[7] **Shrine**: originally, a box holding the bones of a deceased saint; next, a tomb shaped like a shrine.

[8] **Armenie**: Armenia.

[9] **Rod**: see Exodus xiv. 21.

[10] **Thunder-dint**: thunder-clap.

[11] **Saint James's cockle-shell**: the shrine of St. James, the national saint of Spain, at Compostella, was a favorite resort of pilgrims in the Middle

Of fair Montserrat,[1] too, can tell;
And of that Grot[2] where Olives nod,
Where, darling of each heart and eye,
From all the youth of Sicily,
Saint Rosalie retired to God.

XXIV.

'To stout Saint George of Norwich merry,
Saint Thomas,[3] too, of Canterbury,
Cuthbert of Durham,[4] and Saint Bede,
For his sins' pardon hath he prayed.
He knows the passes[5] of the North,
And seeks far shrines beyond the Forth;
Little he eats, and long will wake,
And drinks but of the stream or lake.
This were a guide o'er moor and dale;
But when our John hath quaffed his ale,
As little as the wind that blows,
And warms itself against his nose,
Kens he, or cares, which way he goes.' —

Ages. The cockle shell was his especial symbol; and the palmer wore one, to show that he had visited the shrine.

[1] **Montserrat**: an abbey on the mountain of Montserrat, in northeastern Spain.

[2] **Grot**: Santa Rosalia of Palermo, having resolved to devote herself to God, forsook her father's house, and, going into a cleft, or grot, in a mountain, there spent her life in meditation and prayer. A chapel, dedicated to her memory, was built on the spot where her body was found.

[3] **Saint Thomas**: the martyr, Thomas à Becket.

[4] **Cuthbert**: the shrine of St. Cuthbert, in Durham Cathedral, was visited by pilgrims for centuries, in the belief that his body was miraculously preserved.

[5] **Passes**: the passes through the mountains.

XXV.

'Gramercy!'[1] quoth[2] Lord Marmion,
'Full loth were I that Friar John,
That venerable man, for me
Were placed in fear or jeopardy:[3]
If this same Palmer will me lead
From hence to Holy-Rood,
Like his good saint, I'll pay his meed,
Instead of cockle-shell or bead,[4]
With angels fair and good.
I love such holy ramblers; still
They know to charm a weary hill
With song, romance, or lay:
Some jovial tale, or glee, or jest,
Some lying legend, at the least,
They bring to cheer the way.'—

XXVI.

'Ah! noble sir,' young Selby said,
And finger on his lip he laid,
'This man knows much, perchance e'en[5] more
Than he could learn by holy lore.
Still[6] to himself he's muttering,
And shrinks as at some unseen thing.
Last night we listened at his cell;[7]
Strange sounds we heard, and, sooth to tell,

[1] **Gramercy**: many thanks. [2] **Quoth**: said.
[3] **Jeopardy**: danger.
[4] **Bead**: referring to the beads used in telling or counting prayers.
[5] **E'en**: even. [6] **Still**: even or constantly.
[7] **Cell**: any small apartment or place of residence.

He murmured on till morn, howe'er
No living mortal could be near.
Sometimes I thought I heard it plain,
As other voices spoke again.
I cannot tell — I like it not —
Friar John hath told us it is wrote,
No conscience clear and void of wrong
Can rest awake and pray so long.
Himself still sleeps before his beads
Have marked ten aves[1] and two creeds.'[2] —

XXVII.

'Let pass,'[3] quoth Marmion; 'by my fay,
This man shall guide me on my way,
Although the great arch-fiend[4] and he
Had sworn themselves of company.
So please you, gentle youth, to call
This Palmer to the castle hall.'
The summoned Palmer came in place:
His sable cowl[5] o'erhung his face;
In his black mantle was he clad,
With Peter's keys,[6] in cloth of red,
On his broad shoulders wrought;
The scallop shell[7] his cap did deck;

[1] **Aves**: prayers to the Virgin Mary, beginning with the Latin word *ave* (hail).

[2] **Creeds**: referring to the Apostles' Creed, which begins with the Latin word *credo* (I believe).

[3] **Let pass**: it matters not.

[4] **Arch-fiend**: Satan.

[5] **Cowl**: a monk's hood.

[6] **Peter's keys**: St. Peter's keys, one of the principal emblems of the Catholic Church. They signify power; see Matt. xvi. 19.

[7] **Scallop shell**: same as cockle shell. See note 11, p. 37.

The crucifix[1] around his neck
Was from Loretto[2] brought;
His sandals[3] were with travel tore,
Staff, budget, bottle, scrip,[4] he wore;
The faded palm-branch in his hand
Showed pilgrim from the Holy Land.

XXVIII.

Whenas the Palmer came in hall,
Nor Lord nor knight was there more tall,
Or had a statelier step withal,
Or looked more high and keen;
For no saluting did he wait,
But strode across the hall of state,
And fronted Marmion where he sate,
As he his peer had been.
But his gaunt frame was worn with toil;
His cheek was sunk, alas the while!
And when he struggled at a smile
His eye looked haggard wild:
Poor wretch, the mother that him bare,
If she had been in presence there,
In his wan[5] face and sunburnt hair
She had not known her child.
Danger, long travel, want, or woe,

[1] **Crucifix**: a cross having on it an image of Christ.

[2] **Loretto**: a celebrated sanctuary — the "Holy House" — in a church in Loretto, Italy. According to an ancient legend, the "Holy House" was that in which the Virgin Mary was born; and it was said to have been miraculously transported by angels from Nazareth to Italy.

[3] **Sandals**: a kind of shoes consisting of soles only, fastened to the foot by means of straps.

[4] **Scrip**: a bag or wallet.

[5] **Wan**: pale.

Soon change the form that best we know —
For deadly fear can time outgo,
And blanch at once the hair;
Hard toil can roughen form and face,
And want can quench the eye's bright grace,
Nor does old age a wrinkle trace
More deeply than despair.
Happy whom none of these befall,
But this poor Palmer knew them all.

XXIX.

Lord Marmion then his boon[1] did ask;
The Palmer took on him the task,
So he would march with morning tide,
To Scottish court to be his guide.
'But I have solemn vows to pay,
And may not linger by the way,
To fair Saint Andrew's[2] bound,
Within the ocean-cave to pray,
Where good Saint Rule[3] his holy lay,
From midnight to the dawn of day,
Sung to the billows' sound;
Thence to Saint Fillan's[4] blessed well,
Whose spring can frenzied dreams dispel,
And the crazed brain restore.

[1] **Boon:** favor.

[2] **Saint Andrew's:** a city of Scotland, almost 40 miles northeast of Edinburgh; here St. Rule once had his cell.

[3] **Saint Rule:** he was the first missionary who converted the Scotch to Christianity, and, according to the legend, carried the bones of the apostle Andrew to Scotland.

[4] **Saint Fillan's:** a village of Perthshire, Scotland. The peasantry still believe in the miraculous power of the well to cure disease.

Saint Mary[1] grant that cave or spring
Could back to peace my bosom bring,
Or bid it throb no more!'

XXX.

And now the midnight draught of sleep,
Where wine and spices richly steep,
In massive bowl of silver deep,
The page presents on knee.
Lord Marmion drank a fair good rest,
The captain pledged[2] his noble guest,
The cup went through among the rest,
Who drained it merrily;
Alone the Palmer passed it by,
Though Selby pressed him courteously.
This was a sign the feast was o'er;
It hushed the merry wassail[3] roar,
The minstrels ceased to sound.
Soon in the castle nought was heard
But the slow footstep of the guard
Pacing his sober round.

XXXI.

With early dawn Lord Marmion rose:
And first the chapel doors unclose;
Then, after morning rites[4] were done —
A hasty mass from Friar John —

[1] **Saint Mary**: the Virgin Mary.
[2] **Pledged**: drank his health.
[3] **Wassail**: here, festivity.
[4] **Rites**: religious services.

And knight and squire had broke their fast
On rich substantial repast,
Lord Marmion's bugles blew to horse.
Then came the stirrup-cup [1] in course:
Between the baron and his host,
No point of courtesy was lost;
High thanks were by Lord Marmion paid,
Solemn excuse the captain made,
Till, filing from the gate, had passed
That noble train, their lord the last.
Then loudly rung the trumpet call;
Thundered the cannon from the wall,
And shook the Scottish shore;
Around the castle eddied slow
Volumes of smoke as white as snow
And hid its turrets hoar,
Till they rolled forth upon the air,
And met the river breezes there,
Which gave again the prospect fair.

[1] **Stirrup-cup**: a cup drunk at parting.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO SECOND.

TO THE REV. JOHN MARRIOT,[1] A.M.

Ashestiel, Ettrick Forest.

THE scenes are desert now and bare,
Where flourished once a forest fair,
When these waste glens with copse[2] were lined,
And peopled with the hart and hind.[3]
Yon thorn — perchance whose prickly spears
Have fenced him for three hundred years,
While fell around his green compeers[4] —
Yon lonely thorn, would he could tell
The changes of his parent dell,
Since he, so gray and stubborn now,
Waved in each breeze a sapling bough!
Would he could tell how deep the shade
A thousand mingled branches made;
How broad the shadows of the oak,
How clung the rowan[5] to the rock,
And through the foliage showed his head,
With narrow leaves and berries red;
What pines on every mountain sprung,
O'er every dell what birches hung,

[1] **Rev. John Marriot, A.M.**: Mr. Marriot, who died while a young man, in 1808, was tutor to George Henry, Lord Scott; he wrote several ballads, which Scott published in *Border Minstrelsy*.

[2] **Copse**: see **Copsewood**, note 5, page 12.

[3] **Hart and hind**: male and female deer.

[4] **Compeers**: companions.

[5] **Rowan**: the mountain ash.

In every breeze what aspens shook,
What alders shaded every brook!

'Here in my shade,' methinks he'd say,
'The mighty stag at noontide lay;
The wolf I've seen, a fiercer game, —
The neighboring dingle [1] bears his name, —
With lurching step around me prowl,
And stop, against the moon to howl;
The mountain-boar, on battle set,
His tusks upon my stem would whet;
While doe, and roe,[2] and red-deer good,
Have bounded by through gay greenwood.
Then oft from Newark's [3] riven tower
Sallied a Scottish monarch's power:
A thousand vassals [4] mustered round,
With horse, and hawk,[5] and horn, and hound;
And I might see the youth intent
Guard every pass with crossbow bent;
And through the brake,[6] the rangers [7] stalk,
And falconers hold the ready hawk;
And foresters in greenwood trim,
Lead in the leash the gazehounds [8] grim,
Attentive, as the bratchet's [9] bay

[1] **Dingle**: a narrow valley. [2] **Roe**: a species of mountain deer.
[3] **Newark's riven tower**: Newark Castle, with its cracked or riven tower, is on the Yarrow, a tributary of the Tweed, Scotland.
[4] **Vassals**: followers, dependents.
[5] **Hawk**: the hawk, like the falcon, was used in hunting small game.
[6] **Brake**: here, underbrush.
[7] **Rangers**: the keepers of the king's forest, or hunting-ground; they helped to rouse the game.
[8] **Gazehounds**: hounds which follow game by sight, not scent.
[9] **Bratchets**: slow hounds.

From the dark covert drove the prey,
To slip them[1] as he broke away.
The startled quarry[2] bounds amain,
As fast the gallant greyhounds strain;
Whistles the arrow from the bow,
Answers the harquebuss[3] below;
While all the rocking hills reply
To hoof-clang, hound, and hunters' cry,
And bugles ringing lightsomely.'[4]

Of such proud huntings many tales
Yet linger in our lonely dales,
Up pathless Ettrick[5] and on Yarrow,
Where erst[6] the outlaw drew his arrow.
But not more blithe that sylvan[7] court,
Than we have been at humbler sport;
Though small our pomp and mean our game,
Our mirth, dear Marriot, was the same.
Remember'st thou my greyhounds true?
O'er holt[8] or hill there never flew,
From slip or leash there never sprang,
More fleet of foot or sure of fang.
Nor dull, between each merry chase,
Passed by the intermitted space;
For we had fair resource in store,

[1] **To slip them**: that is, let slip or loose the hounds at the right moment.
[2] **Quarry**: game.
[3] **Harquebuss**: a long, heavy gun.
[4] **Lightsomely**: gaily, cheerfully.
[5] **Ettrick**: the Yarrow is a branch of the Ettrick, which empties into the Tweed. "Pathless Ettrick" here refers, apparently, to Ettrick Forest.
[6] **Erst**: once.
[7] **Sylvan**: wooded, shaded.
[8] **Holt**: woodland.

In Classic and in Gothic[1] lore:
We marked each memorable scene,
And held poetic talk between;
Nor hill, nor brook, we paced along,
But had its legend or its song.
All silent now — for now are still
Thy bowers, untenanted Bowhill![2]
No longer from thy mountains dun
The yeoman[3] hears the well-known gun,
And while his honest heart glows warm
At thought of his paternal farm,
Round to his mates a brimmer[4] fills,
And drinks, 'The Chieftain of the Hills!'[5]
No fairy forms, in Yarrow's bowers,
Trip o'er the walks or tend the flowers.
Fair as the elves[6] whom Janet[7] saw
By moonlight dance on Carterhaugh;[8]
No youthful Baron's[9] left to grace
The Forest-Sheriff's[10] lonely chace,[11]
And ape, in manly step and tone,
The majesty of Oberon:[12]

[1] **Gothic**: here, meaning not classical, romantic.
[2] **Bowhill**: a country seat of the Duke of Buccleuch.
[3] **Yeoman**: a countryman, a small farmer.
[4] **Brimmer**: a cup filled to the brim.
[5] **Chieftain of the Hills**: referring, perhaps, to the Duke of Buccleuch.
[6] **Elves**: fairies.
[7] **Janet**: this refers to the story of *Young Tamlane*, given by Scott in his volume of *Border Minstrelsy*.
[8] **Carterhaugh**: a meadow not far from Newark Castle.
[9] **Baron**: the Duke of Buccleuch.
[10] **Forest-Sheriff**: an officer who had charge of a forest. Scott was himself forest-sheriff at one time.
[11] **Chace**: hunting.
[12] **Oberon**: the king of the fairies in Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

And she[1] is gone whose lovely face
Is but her least and lowest grace;
Though if to Sylphid[2] Queen 'twere given
To show our earth the charms of heaven,
She could not glide along the air
With form more light or face more fair.
No more the widow's deafened ear
Grows quick that lady's step to hear:
At noontide she expects her not,
Nor busies her to trim the cot;[3]
Pensive she turns her humming wheel,
Or pensive cooks her orphans' meal,
Yet blesses, ere she deals their bread,
The gentle hand by which they're fed.

From Yair—which hills so closely bind,
Scarce can the Tweed his passage find,
Though much he fret, and chafe, and toil,
Till all his eddying currents boil—
Her long-descended lord is gone,
And left us by the stream alone.
And much I miss those sportive boys,
Companions of my mountain joys,
Just at the age 'twixt boy and youth,
When thought is speech, and speech is truth.
Close to my side with what delight
They pressed to hear of Wallace[4] wight,[5]

[1] **She**: referring to the lady who became the Duchess of Buccleuch.
[2] **Sylphid**: sylphs are imaginary spirits, or fairies, inhabiting the air; and sylphid is a diminutive form of sylph. [3] **Cot**: cottage.
[4] **Wallace**: a celebrated Scottish hero and patriot of the thirteenth century.
[5] **Wight**: this word appears to be used here as an adjective, meaning strong, active, warlike.

When, pointing to his airy mound,[1]
I called his ramparts holy ground!
Kindled their brows to hear me speak;
And I have smiled to feel my cheek,
Despite the difference of our years,
Return again the glow of theirs.
Ah, happy boys! such feelings pure,
They will not, cannot long endure;
Condemned to stem the world's rude tide,
You may not linger by the side;
For Fate shall thrust you from the shore,
And Passion ply the sail and oar.
Yet cherish the remembrance still
Of the lone mountain and the rill;
For trust, dear boys, the time will come,
When fiercer transport shall be dumb,
And you will think right frequently,
But, well I hope, without a sigh,
On the free hours that we have spent
Together on the brown hill's bent.[2]

When, musing on companions gone,
We doubly feel ourselves alone,
Something, my friend, we yet may gain;
There is a pleasure in this pain:
It soothes the love of lonely rest,
Deep in each gentler heart impressed.
'Tis silent amid worldly toils,
And stifled soon by mental broils;

[1] **Airy mound**: Scott informs us that, near his residence of Ashestiel, there is, on a high ridge, a ditch known as Wallace's Trench.

[2] **Bent**: slope; bent is also a kind of coarse grass.

But, in a bosom thus prepared,
Its still small voice is often heard,
Whispering a mingled sentiment
'Twixt resignation and content.
Oft in my mind such thoughts awake
By lone Saint Mary's [1] silent lake:
Thou know'st it well, — nor fen nor sedge [2]
Pollute the pure lake's crystal edge;
Abrupt and sheer, the mountains sink
At once upon the level brink,
And just a trace of silver sand
Marks where the water meets the land.
Far in the mirror, bright and blue,
Each hill's huge outline you may view;
Shaggy with heath, but lonely bare,
Nor tree, nor bush, nor brake is there,
Save where of land yon slender line
Bears thwart [3] the lake the scattered pine.
Yet even this nakedness has power,
And aids the feeling of the hour:
Nor thicket, dell, nor copse you spy,
Where living thing concealed might lie;
Nor point retiring hides a dell
Where swain or woodman lone might dwell.
There's nothing left to fancy's guess,
You see that all is loneliness:
And silence aids — though the steep hills
Send to the lake a thousand rills;
In summer tide so soft they weep,

[1] **Saint Mary's lake**: the source of the Yarrow.
[2] **Sedge**: a kind of marsh grass.
[3] **Thwart**: across.

The sound but lulls the ear asleep;
Your horse's hoof-tread sounds too rude,
So stilly is the solitude.

Nought living meets the eye or ear,
But well I ween the dead are near;
For though, in feudal strife, a foe
Hath laid Our Lady's [1] chapel low,
Yet still, beneath the hallowed soil,
The peasant rests him from his toil,
And dying bids his bones be laid
Where erst his simple fathers prayed.

If age had tamed the passions' strife,
And fate had cut my ties to life,
Here have I thought 'twere sweet to dwell,
And rear again the chaplain's cell,
Like that same peaceful hermitage,
Where Milton longed to spend his age.
'Twere sweet to mark the setting day
On Bourhope's [2] lonely top decay,
And, as it faint and feeble died
On the broad lake and mountain's side,
To say, 'Thus pleasures fade away;
Youth, talents, beauty, thus decay,
And leave us dark, forlorn, and gray;
Then gaze on Dryhope's [3] ruined tower,
And think on Yarrow's faded Flower: [4]

[1] **Our Lady**: the Virgin Mary; the chapel is near St. Mary's Lake.
[2] **Bourhope**: a mountain overlooking St. Mary's Lake (see note 1, page 51).
[3] **Dryhope**: a ruined tower on the bank of St. Mary's Lake.
[4] **Yarrow's faded Flower**: this may refer either to Mary Scott, daugh-

And when that mountain-sound I heard,
Which bids us be for storm prepared,
The distant rustling of his wings,
As up his force the Tempest brings,
'Twere sweet, ere yet his terrors rave,
To sit upon the Wizard's grave,[1]
That Wizard Priest's whose bones are thrust
From company of holy dust;
On which no sunbeam ever shines —
So superstition's creed divines —
Thence view the lake with sullen roar
Heave her broad billows to the shore;
And mark the wild-swans mount the gale,
Spread wide through mist their snowy sail,
And ever stoop again, to lave
Their bosoms on the surging wave;
Then, when against the driving hail
No longer might my plaid[2] avail,
Back to my lonely home retire,
And light my lamp and trim my fire;
There ponder o'er some mystic lay,
Till the wild tale had all its sway,
And, in the bittern's[3] distant shriek,
I heard unearthly voices speak,
And thought the Wizard Priest was come

ter of Philip Scott of Dryhope Tower, or to Mary Lilias Scott, the last of another family of Scotts; both were called "the Flower of Yarrow."

[1] **Wizard's grave**: in a burial ground near Our Lady's Chapel (see note 1, page 52) is the grave of a priest who was popularly believed to have been a wizard.

[2] **Plaid**: the checked, shawl-like garment which forms a prominent part of the costume of the Highlanders of Scotland.

[3] **Bittern**: a wading bird, a kind of heron.

To claim again his ancient home!
And bade my busy fancy range,
To frame him fitting shape and strange,
Till from the task my brow I cleared,
And smiled to think that I had feared.

But chief 'twere sweet to think such life —
Though but escape from fortune's strife —
Something most matchless good and wise,
A great and grateful sacrifice,
And deem each hour to musing given
A step upon the road to heaven.

Yet him whose heart is ill at ease
Such peaceful solitudes displease;
He loves to drown his bosom's jar
Amid the elemental war:
And my black Palmer's choice had been
Some ruder and more savage scene,
Like that which frowns round dark Loch-skene.[1]
There eagles scream from isle to shore;
Down all the rocks the torrents roar;
O'er the black waves incessant driven,
Dark mists infect the summer heaven;
Through the rude barriers of the lake,
Away its hurrying waters break,
Faster and whiter dash and curl,
Till down yon dark abyss they hurl.
Rises the fog-smoke white as snow,
Thunders the viewless stream below,

[1] **Loch-skene**: a wild mountain lake near the source of the river Yarrow, in Dumfries-shire.

Diving, as if condemned to lave
Some demon's subterranean cave,
Who, prisoned by enchanter's spell,
Shakes the dark rock with groan and yell.
And well that Palmer's form and mien
Had suited with the stormy scene,
Just on the edge, straining his ken [1]
To view the bottom of the den,
Where, deep deep down, and far within,
Toils with the rocks the roaring linn; [2]
Then, issuing forth one foamy wave,
And wheeling round the Giant's Grave,[3]
White as the snowy charger's tail,
Drives down the pass of Moffatdale.

Marriot, thy harp, on Isis [4] strung,
To many a Border theme has rung:
Then list to me, and thou shalt know
Of this mysterious Man of Woe.

[1] **Ken**: sight.
[2] **Linn**: here, a cataract.
[3] **Giant's Grave**: a trench, bearing that name, near the foot of the cataract.
[4] **Isis**: here, in the sense of Oxford, which is on the Isis or upper Thames.

Canto Second.

THE CONVENT.

I.

THE breeze which swept away the smoke
Round Norham Castle rolled,
When all the loud artillery spoke
With lightning-flash and thunder-stroke,
As Marmion left the hold, —
It curled not Tweed alone, that breeze,
For, far upon Northumbrian seas,[1]
It freshly blew and strong,
Where, from high Whitby's cloistered pile,[2]
Bound to Saint Cuthbert's Holy Isle,[3]
It bore a bark along.
Upon the gale she stooped her side,
And bounded o'er the swelling tide,
As she were dancing home;
The merry seamen laughed to see
Their gallant ship so lustily
Furrow the green sea-foam.
Much joyed they in their honored freight;

[1] **Northumbrian seas**: the North Sea washes the coast of Northumberland, England.

[2] **Cloistered pile**: the abbey of Whitby on the coast of Yorkshire; cloistered, furnished with cloisters or covered walks, they usually surround the four sides of a quadrangle or court.

[3] **Saint Cuthbert's Holy Isle** (see note 1, page 31).

For on the deck, in chair of state,
The Abbess of Saint Hilda[1] placed,
With five fair nuns, the galley[2] graced.

II.

'Twas sweet to see these holy maids,
Like birds escaped to greenwood shades,
Their first flight from the cage,
How timid, and how curious too,
For all to them was strange and new,
And all the common sights they view
Their wonderment engage.
One eyed the shrouds[3] and swelling sail,
With many a benedicite;[4]
One at the rippling surge grew pale,
And would for terror pray,
Then shrieked because the sea-dog[5] nigh
His round black head and sparkling eye
Reared o'er the foaming spray;
And one would still adjust her veil,
Disordered by the summer gale,
Perchance lest some more worldly eye
Her dedicated[6] charms might spy,
Perchance because such action graced

[1] **Abbess of Saint Hilda**: Whitby Abbey contained both monks and nuns; the abbess was, in this case, the head of the whole monastery.

[2] **Galley**: a vessel which may be propelled by oars, but which usually (as in this case), had sails, on which it mainly depended.

[3] **Shrouds**: large ropes supporting the masts.

[4] **Benedicite**: the first word of a Latin prayer, here used as an exclamation, — Bless us!

[5] **Sea-dog**: the seal.

[6] **Dedicated**: meaning devoted to religion, withdrawn from the world.

Her fair-turned arm and slender waist.
Light was each simple bosom there,
Save two, who ill might pleasure share, —
The Abbess and the Novice[1] Clare.

III.

The Abbess was of noble blood,
But early took the veil[2] and hood,
Ere upon life she cast a look,
Or knew the world that she forsook.
Fair too she was, and kind had been
As she was fair, but ne'er had seen
For her a timid lover sigh,
Nor knew the influence of her eye.
Love to her ear was but a name,
Combined with vanity and shame;
Her hopes, her fears, her joys, were all
Bounded within the cloister wall;
The deadliest sin her mind could reach
Was of monastic rule the breach,
And her ambition's highest aim
To emulate Saint Hilda's fame.
For this she gave her ample dower
To raise the convent's eastern tower;
For this, with carving rare and quaint,
She decked the chapel of the saint,
And gave the relic-shrine[3] of cost,

[1] **Novice**: one that has entered a monastery, but has not taken the vow.
[2] **Veil**: the nun's veil and hood taken by a woman on entering a convent.
[3] **Relic-shrine**: the shrine containing the remains or relics of the saint to whose memory the monastery was consecrated.

With ivery and gems embossed.
The poor her convent's bounty blest,
The pilgrim in its halls found rest.

IV.

Black was her garb, her rigid rule
Reformed on Benedictine school;[1]
Her cheek was pale, her form was spare;
Vigils and penitence austere
Had early quenched the light of youth:
But gentle was the dame, in sooth;
Though, vain of her religious sway,
She loved to see her maids obey,
Yet nothing stern was she in cell,
And the nuns loved their Abbess well.
Sad was this voyage to the dame;
Summoned to Lindisfarne, she came,
There, with Saint Cuthbert's Abbot old
And Tynemouth's Prioress,[2] to hold
A chapter[3] of Saint Benedict,
For inquisition stern and strict
On two apostates[4] from the faith,
And, if need were, to doom to death.

[1] **Benedictine school**: the monastic rules originally imposed by St. Benedict, which required the time to be divided between meditation, religious services, and useful employment. The motto of the order was Pray and Labor. It was founded in Italy about 530 A.D. by St. Benedict, and introduced into England about the year 600.

[2] **Tynemouth's Prioress**: the head of the monastery of Tynemouth, at the mouth of the river Tyne.

[3] **Chapter**: religious council or court.

[4] **Apostates**: here, those who, without permission, have forsaken a monastery, and broken their religious vows.

V.

Nought say I here of Sister Clare,
Save this, that she was young and fair;
As yet a novice unprofessed,[1]
Lovely and gentle, but distressed.
She was betrothed to one now dead,
Or worse, who had dishonored fled.
Her kinsmen bade her give her hand
To one who loved her for her land;
Herself, almost heart-broken now,
Was bent to take the vestal vow,[2]
And shroud within St. Hilda's gloom
Her blasted hopes and withered bloom.

VI.

She sate upon the galley's prow,
And seemed to mark the waves below;
Nay, seemed so fixed her look and eye,
To count them as they glided by.
She saw them not — 'twas seeming all —
Far other scene her thoughts recall, —
A sun-scorched desert, waste and bare,
Nor waves nor breezes murmured there;
There saw she where some careless hand
O'er a dead corpse had heaped the sand,
To hide it till the jackals[3] come
To tear it from the scanty tomb. —

[1] **Unprofessed**: not having publicly embraced the life of a nun.

[2] **Vestal vow**: the vow of a virgin devoting herself entirely to the monastic life.

[3] **Jackals**: wild beasts which feed on the carcasses of animals and remnants of the lion's prey.

See what a woful look was given,
As she raised up her eyes to heaven!

VII.

Lovely, and gentle, and distressed —
These charms might tame the fiercest breast:
Harpers have sung and poets told
That he, in fury uncontrolled,
The shaggy monarch[1] of the wood,
Before a virgin, fair and good,
Hath pacified his savage mood.
But passions in the human frame
Oft put the lion's rage to shame;
And jealousy, by dark intrigue,
With sordid avarice in league,
Had practised with their bowl[2] and knife
Against the mourner's harmless life.
This crime was charged 'gainst those who lay
Prisoned in Cuthbert's islet gray.

VIII.

And now the vessel skirts the strand
Of mountainous Northumberland;
Towns, towers, and halls successive rise,
And catch the nuns' delighted eyes.
Monk-Wearmouth[3] soon behind them lay,

[1] **Shaggy monarch**: the lion (see Spenser's story of Una and the Lion, in the *Faërie Queene*).

[2] **Bowl**: here, poison.

[3] **Monk-Wearmouth**: a monastery at the mouth of the river Wear. All the places named below are on the coast of the North Sea, between Whitby, Yorkshire, and Holy Island, off Northumberland.

And Tynemouth's priory and bay;
They marked amid her trees the hall
Of lofty Seaton-Delaval;[1]
They saw the Blythe and Wansbeck[2] floods
Rush to the sea through sounding woods;
They passed the tower of Widderington,[3]
Mother of many a valiant son;
At Coquet-isle[4] their beads they tell[5]
To the good saint who owned the cell;
Then did the Alne[6] attention claim,
And Warkworth,[7] proud of Percy's name;
And next they crossed themselves to hear
The whitening breakers sound so near,
Where, boiling through the rocks, they roar
On Dunstanborough's[8] caverned shore;
Thy tower, proud Bamborough,[9] marked they there,
King Ida's castle, huge and square,
From its tall rock look grimly down,
And on the swelling ocean frown;
Then from the coast they bore away,
And reached the Holy Island's bay.

[1] **Seaton-Delaval**: the residence of the Delaval family.

[2] **Blythe and Wansbeck**: rivers of Northumberland emptying into the North Sea.

[3] **Widderington**: Widderington Church.

[4] **Coquet-isle**: an island near the mouth of the Coquet River.

[5] **Tell**: count in prayer.

[6] **Alne**: a river north of the Coquet.

[7] **Warkworth**: Warkworth Castle, the property of the Percy family. It is on the Alne.

[8] **Dunstanborough**: a castle of this name on the coast of Northumberland.

[9] **Bamborough**: Bamborough Castle within sight of Holy Island. It is one of the oldest castles in Great Britain. It crowns a rock rising 150 feet above the sea, and is accessible only on the southeast.

IX.

The tide did now its flood-mark gain,
And girdled in the Saint's domain;
For, with the flow and ebb, its style
Varies from continent to isle;
Dry shod, o'er sands, twice every day
The pilgrims to the shrine find way;
Twice every day the waves efface
Of staves and sandalled feet the trace.
As to the port the galley flew,
Higher and higher rose to view
The castle with its battled walls,
The ancient monastery's halls,
A solemn, huge, and dark-red pile,
Placed on the margin of the isle.

X.

In Saxon[1] strength that abbey frowned,
With massive arches broad and round,
That rose alternate, row and row,
On ponderous columns, short and low,
Built ere the art was known,
By pointed aisle and shafted stalk[2]
The arcades[3] of an alleyed walk
To emulate in stone.

[1] **Saxon**: meaning Saxon architecture, or that which prevailed in England before the Norman Conquest, in 1066.

[2] **Stalk**: here, a column made up of several shafts; an example of the pointed or Gothic architecture which was introduced about the last of the twelfth century.

[3] **Arcades**: a series of arches supported on columns; here, the comparison is to the arched branches of trees, which some suppose first suggested architectural arcades.

On the deep walls the heathen Dane[1]
Had poured his impious rage in vain;
And needful was such strength to these,
Exposed to the tempestuous seas,
Scourged by the winds' eternal sway,
Open to rovers fierce as they,
Which could twelve hundred years withstand
Winds, waves, and northern pirates' hand.
Not but that portions of the pile,
Rebuilded in a later style,
Showed where the spoiler's hand had been;
Not but the wasting sea-breeze keen
Had worn the pillar's carving quaint,
And moulded in his niche the saint,[2]
And rounded with consuming power
The pointed angles of each tower;
Yet still entire the abbey stood,
Like veteran, worn, but unsubdued.

XI.

Soon as they neared his turrets strong,
The maidens raised St. Hilda's song,
And with the sea-wave and the wind
Their voices, sweetly shrill, combined,
And made harmonious close;
Then, answering from the sandy shore,
Half-drowned amid the breakers' roar,

[1] **Dane**: the Danish "rovers" or pirates ravaged the northeastern coasts of England from the eighth down to the eleventh century.

[2] **The saint**: images of saints were placed in niches as architectural decorations.

According[1] chorus rose:
Down to the haven of the Isle
The monks and nuns in order file
From Cuthbert's cloisters grim;
Banner, and cross, and relics there,
To meet St. Hilda's maids, they bare;
And, as they caught the sounds on air,
They echoed back the hymn.
The islanders in joyous mood
Rushed emulously through the flood
To hale[2] the bark to land;
Conspicuous by her veil and hood,
Signing the cross, the Abbess stood,
And blessed them with her hand.

XII.

Suppose we now the welcome said,
Suppose the convent banquet made:
All through the holy dome,
Through cloister, aisle, and gallery,
Wherever vestal maid might pry,
Nor risk to meet unhallowed eye,
The stranger sisters roam;
Till fell the evening damp with dew,
And the sharp sea-breeze coldly blew,
For there even summer night is chill.
Then, having strayed and gazed their fill,
They closed around the fire;
And all, in turn, essayed to paint

[1] **According**: harmonious. [2] **Hale**: haul.

The rival merits of their saint,
A theme that ne'er can tire
A holy maid, for be it known
That their saint's honor is their own.

XIII.

Then Whitby's nuns exulting told
How to their house three barons [1] bold
Must menial service do,
While horns blow out a note of shame,
And monks cry, 'Fie upon your name!
In wrath, for loss of sylvan game,
Saint Hilda's priest ye slew.' —
'This, on Ascension-day,[2] each year,
While laboring on our harbor-pier,
Must Herbert, Bruce, and Percy hear.' —
They told how in their convent-cell
A Saxon princess once did dwell,
The lovely Edelfled;[3]
And how, of thousand snakes, each one
Was changed into a coil of stone[4]

[1] **Three barons**: three barons, while hunting on the grounds of the Abbot of Whitby, wounded a religious hermit — "Saint Hilda's priest"; as a punishment, they were obliged to cut a certain quantity of wood on Ascension-day (Acts i. 1–11), the fortieth day after Easter, of each year, and carry it to Whitby on their backs amid the cries and jeers of the monks.

[2] **Ascension-day**: see note above, on **Three barons**.

[3] **Edelfled**: a Saxon king (655), out of gratitude for a great victory, "dedicated Edelfleda," his infant daughter, to the service of God in the monastery of Whitby, of which St. Hilda was then abbess.

[4] **Coil of stone**: these coils of stone, once supposed to be petrified snakes, are still found in the rocks about Whitby. They are the fossil shells of the *Ammonite*, a creature resembling the nautilus.

When holy Hilda prayed;
Themselves, within their holy bound,
Their stony folds had often found,
They told how sea-fowls' pinions fail,[1]
As over Whitby's towers they sail,
And, sinking down, with flutterings faint,
They do their homage to the saint.

XIV.

Nor did Saint Cuthbert's daughters fail
To vie with these in holy tale;
His body's resting-place, of old,
How oft their patron changed,[2] they told;
How, when the rude Dane burned their pile,
The monks fled forth from Holy Isle;
O'er Northern mountain, marsh, and moor,
From sea to sea, from shore to shore,
Seven years Saint Cuthbert's corpse they bore.
They rested them in fair Melrose;
But though, alive, he loved it well,
Not there his relics might repose;
For, wondrous tale to tell!
In his stone coffin forth he rides,
A ponderous bark for river tides,

[1] **Fail**: it is said that great numbers of gulls and other birds, after a long flight over the waters, stop to rest at Whitby; this appears to have given rise to the belief that the birds paused to do "homage to the saint."

[2] **Changed**: Scott states that St. Cuthbert's body was carried about by monks for many years. They halted with it for a longer or shorter time at Norham, Melrose Abbey (Scotland), and various other places. At length the remains of the saint were secretly buried at Durham. "His last resting-place," says Lockhart, "is now known to be in a grave under the choir of Durham Cathedral."

Yet light as gossamer it glides
Downward to Tilmouth cell.[1]
Nor long was his abiding there,
For southward did the saint repair;
Chester-le-Street[2] and Ripon[3] saw
His holy corpse ere Wardilaw[4]
Hailed him with joy and fear;
And, after many wanderings past,
He chose his lordly seat at last
Where his cathedral, huge and vast,
Looks down upon the Wear.[5]
There, deep in Durham's Gothic shade,
His relics are in secret laid;
But none may know the place,
Save of his holiest servants three,
Deep sworn to solemn secrecy,
Who share that wondrous grace.

XV.

Who may his miracles declare?
Even Scotland's dauntless king and heir —[6]
Although with them they led
Galwegians,[7] wild as ocean's gale,

[1] **Tilmouth**: the mouth of the river Till (a branch of the Tweed) in Northumberland.

[2] **Chester-le-Street**: a village of Durham County.

[3] **Ripon**: a city of Yorkshire.

[4] **Wardilaw**: a village near the city of Durham.

[5] **The Wear**: the river of that name on which Durham is situated.

[6] **King and heir**: David I., with his son and heir, Henry, invaded England, in 1137, with a great host; but the English — thanks, it was said, to the holy banner of St. Cuthbert, with those of other saints — gained a decisive victory at Northallerton, Northumberland.

[7] **Galwegians**: inhabitants of southwestern Scotland.

And Loden's knights,[1] all sheathed in mail,
And the bold men of Teviotdale —[2]
Before his standard[3] fled.
'Twas he, to vindicate his reign,
Edged Alfred's[4] falchion on the Dane,
And turned the Conqueror[5] back again,
When, with his Norman bowyer[6] band,
He came to waste Northumberland.

XVI.

But fain St. Hilda's nuns would learn
If on a rock, by Lindisfarne,
Saint Cuthbert sits, and toils to frame
The sea-born beads[7] that bear his name:
Such tales had Whitby's fishers told,
And said they might his shape behold,
And hear his anvil sound;
A deadened clang, — a huge dim form,
Seen but, and heard, when gathering storm
And night were closing round.
But this, as tale of idle fame,
The nuns of Lisdisfarne disclaim.

[1] **Loden's**: this seems to be a poetical form of Lothian's; the name given to a division of the country around Edinburgh. It comprises the shires or counties of Haddington, Edinburgh, and Linlithgow.

[2] **Teviotdale**: the valley of the river Teviot in southeastern Scotland.

[3] **Standard**: referring to the banner of St. Cuthbert.

[4] **Alfred**: a legend reports St. Cuthbert as appearing to King Alfred of England in a vision and promising him help to overcome the Danish invaders.

[5] **Conqueror**: William the Conqueror.

[6] **Bowyer**: archer.

[7] **Beads**: small, perforated fossil lily stems (stone lilies) resembling beads, found in abundance at Holy Island and its vicinity; they are called "St. Cuthbert's beads."

XVII.

While round the fire such legends go,
Far different was the scene of woe
Where, in a secret aisle beneath,
Council was held of life and death.
It was more dark and lone, that vault,
Than the worst dungeon cell;
Old Colwulf[1] built it, for his fault
In penitence to dwell,
When he for cowl and beads laid down
The Saxon battle-axe and crown.
This den, which, chilling every sense
Of feeling, hearing, sight,
Was called the Vault of Penitence,
Excluding air and light,
Was by the prelate[2] Sexhelm made
A place of burial for such dead
As, having died in mortal sin,[3]
Might not be laid the church within.
'Twas now a place of punishment;
Whence, if so loud a shriek were sent
As reached the upper air,
The hearers blessed themselves, and said
The spirits of the sinful dead
Bemoaned their torments there.

XVIII.

But though, in the monastic pile,
Did of this penitential aisle

[1] **Old Colwulf**: King of Northumberland in the eighth century.
[2] **Prelate**: a high dignitary of the church.
[3] **Mortal sin**: in Roman Catholic belief, soul-destroying sin.

Some vague tradition go,
Few only, save the Abbot, knew
Where the place lay, and still more few
Were those who had from him the clew
To that dread vault to go.
Victim and executioner
Were blindfold when transported there.
In low dark rounds the arches hung,
From the rude rock the side-walls sprung;
The gravestones, rudely sculptured o'er,
Half sunk in earth, by time half wore,
Were all the pavement of the floor;
The mildew-drops fell one by one,
With tinkling plash, upon the stone.
A cresset,[1] in an iron chain,
Which served to light this drear domain,
With damp and darkness seemed to strive,
As if it scarce might keep alive;
And yet it dimly served to show
The awful conclave[2] met below.

XIX.

There, met to doom in secrecy,
Were placed the heads of convents three,
All servants of Saint Benedict,
The statutes of whose order strict
On iron table lay;
In long black dress, on seats of stone,
Behind were these three judges shown

[1] **Cresset**: a fixed candlestick or antique chandelier.
[2] **Conclave**: a private meeting or assembly.

By the pale cresset's ray.
The Abbess of Saint Hilda's there
Sat for a space with visage bare,
Until, to hide her bosom's swell,
And tear-drops that for pity fell,
She closely drew her veil;
Yon shrouded figure, as I guess,
By her proud mien and flowing dress,
Is Tynemouth's haughty Prioress,
And she with awe looks pale;
And he, that ancient man, whose sight
Has long been quenched by age's night,
Upon whose wrinkled brow alone
Nor ruth,[1] nor mercy's trace is shown,
Whose look is hard and stern, —
Saint Cuthbert's Abbot is his style,
For sanctity called through the isle
The Saint of Lindisfarne.

XX.

Before them stood a guilty pair;
But, though an equal fate they share,
Yet one alone deserves our care.
Her sex a page's dress belied;[2]
The cloak and doublet, loosely tied,
Obscured her charms, but could not hide.
Her cap down o'er her face she drew;
And, on her doublet breast,
She tried to hide the badge of blue,

[1] **Ruth**: pity.
[2] **Belied**: contradicted or rendered false; here, concealed.

Lord Marmion's falcon crest.[1]
But, at the prioress' command,
A monk undid the silken band
That tied her tresses fair,
And raised the bonnet from her head,
And down her slender form they spread
In ringlets rich and rare.
Constance de Beverley[2] they know,
Sister professed of Fontevraud,[3]
Whom the Church numbered with the dead,
For broken vows and convent fled.

XXI.

When thus her face was given to view,—
Although so pallid was her hue,
It did a ghastly contrast bear
To those bright ringlets glistering[4] fair,—
Her look composed, and steady eye,
Bespoke a matchless constancy;
And there she stood so calm and pale
That, but her breathing did not fail,
And motion slight of eye and head,
And of her bosom, warranted
That neither sense nor pulse she lacks,
You might have thought a form of wax,
Wrought to the very life was there;
So still she was, so pale, so fair.

[1] **Falcon crest** (see Canto I., vi).

[2] **Constance de Beverley**: Marmion's page (see note 3, page 29, and note 1, page 30).

[3] **Fontevraud**: an abbey of France, near Saumur, valley of the Loire.

[4] **Glistering**: shining, glistening.

XXII.

Her comrade was a sordid soul,
Such as does murder for a meed;
Who, but of fear, knows no control,
Because his conscience, seared and foul,
Feels not the import of his deed;
One whose brute-feeling ne'er aspires
Beyond his own more brute desires.
Such tools the Tempter ever needs
To do the savagest of deeds;
For them no visioned terrors daunt,
Their nights no fancied spectres haunt;
One fear with them, of all most base,
The fear of death, alone finds place.
This wretch was clad in frock and cowl,
And shamed not loud to moan and howl,
His body on the floor to dash,
And crouch, like hound beneath the lash;
While his mute partner, standing near,
Waited her doom without a tear.

XXIII.

Yet well the luckless wretch might shriek,
Well might her paleness terror speak!
For there were seen in that dark wall
Two niches, narrow, deep, and tall; —
Who enters at such grisly[1] door
Shall ne'er, I ween, find exit more.
In each a slender meal was laid,
Of roots, of water, and of bread;

[1] **Grisly**: grim, terrible.

By each, in Benedictine dress,
Two haggard monks stood motionless,
Who, holding high a blazing torch,
Showed the grim entrance of the porch;
Reflecting back the smoky beam,
The dark-red walls and arches gleam.
Hewn stones and cement were displayed,
And building tools in order laid.

XXIV.

These executioners were chose
As men who were with mankind foes,
And, with despite [1] and envy fired,
Into the cloister had retired,
Or who, in desperate doubt of grace,
Strove by deep penance to efface
Of some foul crime the stain;
For, as the vassals of her will,
Such men the Church selected still
As either joyed in doing ill,
Or thought more grace to gain
If in her cause they wrestled down
Feelings their nature strove to own.
By strange device were they brought there,
They knew not how, and knew not where.

XXV.

And now that blind old abbot rose,
To speak the Chapter's doom

[1] **Despite**: hatred.

On those the wall was to enclose
Alive within the tomb,
But stopped because that woful maid,
Gathering her powers, to speak essayed;
Twice she essayed, and twice in vain,
Her accents might no utterance gain;
Nought but imperfect murmurs slip
From her convulsed and quivering lip,
'Twixt each attempt all was so still,
You seemed to hear a distant rill —
'Twas ocean's swells and falls;
For though this vault of sin and fear
Was to the sounding surge so near,
A tempest there you scarce could hear,
So massive were the walls.

XXVI.

At length, an effort sent apart
The blood that curdled to her heart,
And light came to her eye,
And color dawned upon her cheek,
A hectic [1] and a fluttered streak,
Like that left on the Cheviot peak
By autumn's stormy sky;
And when her silence broke at length,
Still as she spoke she gathered strength,
And armed herself to bear.
It was a fearful sight to see
Such high resolve and constancy
In form so soft and fair.

[1] **Hectic**: feverish, excited.

XXVII.

'I speak not to implore your grace,
Well know I for one minute's space
Successless might I sue:
Nor do I speak your prayers to gain;
For if a death of lingering pain
To cleanse my sins be penance vain,
Vain are your masses[1] too. —
I listened to a traitor's tale,
I left the convent and the veil;
For three long years I bowed my pride,
A horse-boy in his train to ride;
And well my folly's meed he gave,
Who forfeited, to be his slave,
All here, and all beyond the grave.
He saw young Clara's face more fair,
He knew her of broad lands the heir,
Forgot his vows, his faith forswore,
And Constance was beloved no more.
'T is an old tale, and often told;
But did my fate and wish agree,
Ne'er had been read, in story old,
Of maiden true betrayed for gold,
That loved, or was avenged, like me!

XXVIII.

'The king approved his favorite's aim;
In vain a rival barred his claim,
Whose fate with Clare's was plight,[2]

[1] **Masses**: here, religious services held in behalf of a person after death.
[2] **Plight**: plighted, pledged.

For he attaints[1] that rival's fame
With treason's charge — and on they came
In mortal lists to fight.
Their oaths[2] are said,
Their prayers are prayed,
Their lances in the rest[3] are laid,
They meet in mortal shock;
And hark! the throng, with thundering cry,
Shout "Marmion, Marmion! to the sky,
De Wilton to the block!"
Say, ye who preach Heaven shall decide
When in the lists two champions ride,
Say, was Heaven's justice here?
When, loyal in his love and faith,
Wilton found overthrow or death
Beneath a traitor's spear?
How false the charge, how true he fell,
This guilty packet best can tell.'
Then drew a packet from her breast,
Paused, gathered voice, and spake the rest.

XXIX.

'Still was false Marmion's bridal stayed;
To Whitby's convent fled the maid,
The hated match to shun.
"Ho! shifts she thus?" King Henry cried,
"Sir Marmion, she shall be thy bride,

[1] **Attaints**: stains, disgraces.

[2] **Oaths**: before the fight each of the combatants swore that his cause was true and just.

[3] **In the rest**: the combatants during battle held the butt-end of their lances in a socket or "rest" of their armor.

If she were sworn a nun."
One way remained — the king's command
Sent Marmion to the Scottish land;
I lingered here, and rescue planned
For Clara and for me:
This caitiff[1] monk for gold did swear
He would to Whitby's shrine repair,
And by his drugs my rival fair
A saint in heaven should be;
But ill the dastard kept his oath,
Whose cowardice hath undone us both.

XXX.

'And now my tongue the secret tells,
Not that remorse my bosom swells,
But to assure my soul that none
Shall ever wed with Marmion.
Had fortune my last hope betrayed,
This packet to the king conveyed,
Had given him to the headsman's stroke,
Although my heart that instant broke. —
Now, men of death, work forth your will,
For I can suffer, and be still;
And come he slow, or come he fast,
It is but Death who comes at last.

XXXI.

'Yet dread me from my living tomb,
Ye vassal slaves of bloody Rome!

[1] **Caitiff**: servile, base.

If Marmion's late remorse should wake,
Full soon such vengeance will he take
That you shall wish the fiery Dane
Had rather been your guest again.
Behind, a darker hour ascends!
The altars quake, the crosier[1] bends,
The ire of a despotic king[2]
Rides forth upon destruction's wing;
Then shall these vaults, so strong and deep,
Burst open to the sea-winds' sweep;
Some traveller then shall find my bones
Whitening amid disjointed stones,
And, ignorant of priests' cruelty,
Marvel such relics here should be.'

XXXII.

Fixed was her look and stern her air:
Back from her shoulders streamed her hair;
The locks that wont[3] her brow to shade
Stared up erectly from her head;
Her figure seemed to rise more high;
Her voice despair's wild energy
Had given a tone of prophecy.
Appalled the astonished conclave sate;
With stupid eyes, the men of fate

[1] **Crosier**: an archbishop's staff surmounted by a cross. It is here used as an emblem of the highest power of the British Roman Catholic Church. Henry VIII. separated from that church, destroyed the monasteries (1535–1537), and was the means of establishing a national church independent of Rome; later this church became entirely Protestant.

[2] **Despotic king**: Henry VIII.

[3] **Wont**: were wont, accustomed.

Gazed on the light inspired form,
And listened for the avenging storm;
The judges felt the victim's dread;
No hand was moved, no word was said,
Till thus the abbot's doom was given,
Raising his sightless balls to heaven:
'Sister, let thy sorrows cease;
Sinful brother, part in peace!'[1]
From that dire dungeon, place of doom,
Of execution too, and tomb,
Paced forth the judges three;
Sorrow it were and shame to tell
The butcher-work that there befell,
When they had glided from the cell
Of sin and misery.

XXXIII.

An hundred winding steps convey
That conclave to the upper day;
But ere they breathed the fresher air
They heard the shriekings of despair,
And many a stifled groan:
With speed their upward way they take,—
Such speed as age and fear can make,—
And crossed themselves for terror's sake,
As hurrying, tottering on,
Even in the vesper's[2] heavenly tone
They seemed to hear a dying groan,

[1] **Part in peace**: Depart into the peace of the grave — a death sentence; the words, "let thy sorrows cease," have the same meaning.

[2] **Vesper**: the evening religious service.

And bade the passing knell[1] to toll
For welfare of a parting soul.
Slow o'er the midnight wave it swung,
Northumbrian rocks in answer rung;
To Warkworth cell the echoes rolled,
His beads the wakeful hermit told;[2]
The Bamborough peasant raised his head,
But slept ere half a prayer he said;
So far was heard the mighty knell,
The stag sprung up on Cheviot Fell,[3]
Spread his broad nostril to the wind,
Listed before, aside, behind,
Then couched him down beside the hind,[4]
And quaked among the mountain fern,
To hear that sound so dull and stern.

[1] **Passing knell**: it was customary to toll a bell at the hour of a person's death to protect the departing soul from the power of evil spirits.

[2] **Told**: counted (see note 5, page 62).

[3] **Cheviot Fell**: the highest peak of the Cheviot Hills, which at one point serve as a boundary between England and Scotland (see map).

[4] **Hind**: female deer.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO THIRD.

To WILLIAM ERSKINE, Esq[1]

Ashestiel, Ettrick Forest.

LIKE April morning clouds, that pass
With varying shadow o'er the grass,
And imitate on field and furrow
Life's checkered scene of joy and sorrow;
Like streamlet of the mountain north,
Now in a torrent racing forth,
Now winding slow its silver train,
And almost slumbering on the plain;
Like breezes of the autumn day,
Whose voice inconstant dies away,
And ever swells again as fast
When the ear deems its murmur past;
Thus various, my romantic theme
Flits, winds, or sinks, a morning dream.
Yet pleased, our eye pursues the trace
Of Light and Shade's inconstant race;
Pleased, views the rivulet afar,
Weaving its maze irregular;
And pleased, we listen as the breeze
Heaves its wild sigh through Autumn trees:
Then, wild as cloud, or stream, or gale,
Flow on, flow unconfined, my tale!

[1] **William Erskine, Esq.**: an eminent Scottish lawyer and judge, and one of Sir Walter's most intimate friends.

Need I to thee, dear Erskine, tell
I love the license all too well,
In sounds now lowly, and now strong,
To raise the desultory[1] song?
Oft, when mid such capricious chime
Some transient fit of loftier rhyme
To thy kind judgment seemed excuse
For many an error of the muse,
Oft hast thou said, 'If, still misspent,
Thine hours to poetry are lent,
Go, and to tame thy wandering course,
Quaff from the fountain at the source;
Approach those masters o'er whose tomb
Immortal laurels ever bloom:
Instructive of the feebler bard,
Still from the grave their voice is heard;
From them, and from the paths they showed,
Choose honored guide and practised road;
Nor ramble on through brake and maze,[2]
With harpers rude of barbarous days.

'Or deem'st thou not our later time
Yields topic meet for classic rhyme?
Hast thou no elegiac verse[3]
For BRUNSWICK'S[4] venerable hearse?
What! not a line, a tear, a sigh,
When valor bleeds for liberty? —

[1] **Desultory**: rambling, unconnected.
[2] **Maze**: a confusing network of paths.
[3] **Elegiac verse**: belonging to elegy; mournful, plaintive.
[4] **Brunswick**: the Duke of Brunswick, a celebrated German general; he commanded the Prussian army in 1806 at the battle of Jena, where he was defeated by Napoleon, and soon after died.

Oh, hero of that glorious time,
When, with unrivalled light sublime, —
Though martial Austria, and though all
The might of Russia, and the Gaul,
Though banded Europe stood her foes —
The star of Brandenburg[1] arose!
Thou couldst not live to see her beam
Forever quenched in Jena's stream.
Lamented chief! — it was not given
To thee to change the doom of Heaven,
And crush that dragon[2] in its birth,
Predestined scourge of guilty earth.
Lamented chief! — not thine the power
To save in that presumptuous hour
When Prussia hurried to the field,
And snatched the spear, but left the shield!
Valor and skill 'twas thine to try,
And, tried in vain, 'twas thine to die.
Ill had it seemed thy silver hair
The last, the bitterest pang to share,
For princedoms reft, and scutcheons riven,
And birthrights to usurpers given;
Thy land's, thy children's wrongs to feel,
And witness woes thou couldst not heal!
On thee relenting Heaven bestows
For honored life an honored close;
And when revolves, in time's sure change,

[1] **Star of Brandenburg**: Prussia, because a prince of Brandenburg — Frederick III. — became the first king of Prussia. When Scott wrote *Marmion*, not long after the Prussian defeat at Jena, it seemed to him that Prussia's star was "forever quenched in Jena's stream."

[2] **That dragon**: Napoleon.

The hour of Germany's revenge,
When, breathing fury for her sake,
Some new Arminius[1] shall awake,
Her champion, ere he strike, shall come
To whet his sword on BRUNSWICK'S tomb.

'Or of the Red-Cross hero[2] teach,
Dauntless in dungeon as on breach.[3]
Alike to him the sea, the shore,
The brand, the bridle, or the oar:
Alike to him the war that calls
Its votaries[4] to the shattered walls
Which the grim Turk, besmeared with blood,
Against the Invincible[5] made good;[6]
Or that whose thundering voice could wake
The silence of the polar lake,
When stubborn Russ[7] and mettled[8] Swede
On the warped[9] wave their death-game played;
Or that where Vengeance and Affright
Howled round the father of the fight,[10]

[1] **Arminius**: Hermann, a German hero, called by the Romans, Arminius; in the year 9 A.D. he rose against the Roman power, and succeeded for a time in delivering his country from its oppression.

[2] **Red-Cross hero**: Admiral Sir Sidney Smith, who, under the red cross of England's flag, and having the Turks as allies, repulsed Napoleon's attack on the fort of Saint Jean d'Acre, Syria.

[3] **Breach**: breach in the walls of a fort made by the assaulting party.

[4] **Votaries**: those wholly devoted to any purpose or service; here, to war.

[5] **Invincible**: Napoleon Bonaparte.

[6] **Made good**: made good, or held, "the shattered walls."

[7] **Stubborn Russ**: in the war between Russia and Sweden in 1790, Sir Sidney Smith (the "Red-Cross hero" mentioned above) entered the Swedish service.

[8] **Mettled**: brave, high-spirited.

[9] **Warped**: frozen.

[10] **Father of the fight**: Sir Ralph Abercrombie, a distinguished British

Who snatched on Alexandria's sand
The conqueror's wreath with dying hand.

'Or, if to touch such chord[1] be thine,
Restore the ancient tragic line,
And emulate the notes that rung
From the wild harp which silent hung
By silver Avon's[2] holy shore
Till twice an hundred years rolled o'er;
When she, the bold Enchantress,[3] came,
With fearless hand and heart on flame,
From the pale willow snatched the treasure,
And swept it with a kindred measure,
Till Avon's swans, while rung the grove
With Montfort's hate and Basil's love,[4]
Awakening at the inspired strain,
Deemed their own Shakespeare lived again.'

Thy friendship thus thy judgment wronging
With praises not to me belonging,
In task more meet for mightiest powers
Wouldst thou engage my thriftless hours.
But say, my Erskine, hast thou weighed

general. He was mortally wounded in the battle of Alexandria, Egypt, in the war with Napoleon, 1801.

[1] **Chord**: the string of a harp, here used figuratively for tragic poetry.

[2] **Avon**: referring to Stratford-on-Avon, the birthplace of Shakespeare.

[3] **Enchantress**: Joanna Baillie, who, two hundred years after Shakespeare, wrote plays and poems which, in the opinion of her friend, the author of *Marmion*, would compare with those of the great dramatist himself.

[4] **Montfort and Basil**: *De Montfort*, a tragedy on hatred, and *Basil*, a tragedy on love, by Joanna Baillie. They were published anonymously in 1798, and were then generally supposed to be from Scott's pen.

That secret power by all obeyed,
Which warps not less the passive mind,
Its source concealed or undefined;
Whether an impulse, that has birth
Soon as the infant wakes on earth,
One with our feelings and our powers,
And rather part of us than ours;
Or whether fitlier termed the sway
Of habit, formed in early day?
Howe'er derived, its force confessed
Rules with despotic sway the breast,
And drags us on by viewless chain,
While taste and reason plead in vain.
Look east, and ask the Belgian why,
Beneath Batavia's [1] sultry sky,
He seeks not eager to inhale
The freshness of the mountain gale,
Content to rear his whitened wall
Beside the dank [2] and dull canal?
He'll say, from youth he loved to see
The white sail gliding by the tree.
Or see yon weather-beaten hind,[3]
Whose sluggish herds before him wind,
Whose tattered plaid and rugged cheek
His northern clime and kindred speak;
Through England's laughing meads [4] he goes,
And England's wealth around him flows;
Ask if it would content him well,

[1] **Batavia**: the capital of the Dutch East Indies.
[2] **Dank**: damp.
[3] **Hind**: a peasant, a farm-laborer; but here, a Highlander of Scotland.
[4] **Meads**: meadows.

At ease in those gay plains to dwell,
Where hedge-rows spread a verdant screen,
And spires and forests intervene,
And the neat cottage peeps between?
No! not for these will he exchange
His dark Lochaber's [1] boundless range,
Not for fair Devon's [2] meads forsake
Ben Nevis [3] gray and Garry's [4] lake.

Thus while I ape the measure wild
Of tales that charmed me yet a child,
Rude though they be, still with the chime
Return the thoughts of early time;
And feelings, roused in life's first day,
Glow in the line and prompt the lay.
Then rise those crags, that mountain tower,
Which charmed my fancy's wakening hour.
Though no broad river swept along,
To claim, perchance, heroic song,
Though sighed no groves in summer gale,
To prompt of love a softer tale,
Though scarce a puny streamlet's speed
Claimed homage from a shepherd's reed,[5]
Yet was poetic impulse given
By the green hill and clear blue heaven.

[1] **Lochaber's range**: Lochaber is a wild, mountainous region of Inverness-shire, northwestern Scotland

[2] **Devon**: Devonshire in the southwest of England; it is generally remarkable for its fertility.

[3] **Ben Nevis**: the highest mountain of Britain; it is in the Lochaber district.

[4] **Garry's lake**: a beautiful mountain-lake in Inverness.

[5] **Reed**: a kind of flute.

It was a barren scene and wild,
Where naked cliffs were rudely piled,
But ever and anon,[1] between
Lay velvet tufts of loveliest green;
And well the lonely infant[2] knew
Recesses where the wall-flower[3] grew,
And honeysuckle loved to crawl
Up the low crag and ruined wall.
I deemed such nooks the sweetest shade
The sun in all its round surveyed;
And still I thought that shattered tower
The mightiest work of human power,
And marvelled as the aged hind
With some strange tale bewitched my mind
Of forayers, who with headlong force
Down from that strength[4] had spurred their horse,
Their southern rapine to renew
Far in the distant Cheviots blue,
And, home returning, filled the hall
With revel, wassail-rout,[5] and brawl.
Methought that still with trump and clang
The gateway's broken arches rang;
Methought grim features, seamed with scars,

[1] **Ever and anon**: every now and then.

[2] **The lonely infant**: here, Scott refers to himself. "A fever in infancy rendered Walter lame, . . . and he was sent for recovery to his Grandfather Robert, at Sandy-Knowe [near Kelso, not far from the English border, and but a short distance from Dryburgh Abbey, where Sir Walter is buried]. From this place . . . dated his earliest recollections." — PALGRAVE'S *Scott*.

[3] **Wall-flower**: a beautiful yellow flower which, in its wild state, grows on old walls and stony places.

[4] **Strength**: stronghold; referring to the "shattered tower" of Sandy-Knowe.

[5] **Wassail-rout**: noisy festivity.

Glared through the window's rusty bars,
And ever, by the winter hearth,
Old tales I heard of woe or mirth,
Of lovers' sleights,[1] of ladies' charms,
Of witches' spells, of warriors' arms;
Of patriot battles, won of old
By Wallace wight and Bruce[2] the bold;
Of later fields of feud and fight,
When, pouring from their Highland height,
The Scottish clans in headlong sway
Had swept the scarlet ranks[3] away.
While stretched at length upon the floor,
Again I fought each combat o'er,
Pebbles and shells, in order laid,
The mimic ranks of war displayed;
And onward still the Scottish Lion[4] bore,
And still the scattered Southron[5] fled before.

Still, with vain fondness, could I trace
Anew each kind familiar face
That brightened at our evening fire!
From the thatched[6] mansion's gray-haired sire,[7]
Wise without learning, plain and good,

[1] **Sleights**: stratagems.

[2] **Bruce**: a Scottish hero and king who joined Wallace (see note 4, page 49) in resistance to the aggressions of England. He gained the great victory of Bannockburn in 1314, and eventually gained the recognition of the independence of Scotland.

[3] **Scarlet ranks**: the English with their scarlet uniforms.

[4] **Scottish Lion**: the lion formerly represented on the arms and banners of Scotland.

[5] **Southron**: the English, from their position south of Scotland.

[6] **Thatched**: covered with a roof of straw or reeds.

[7] **Gray-haired sire**: Robert Scott, Sir Walter's grandfather.

And sprung of Scotland's gentler blood;
Whose eye in age, quick, clear, and keen,
Showed what in youth its glance had been;
Whose doom[1] discording neighbors sought,
Content with equity unbought;
To him the venerable priest,
Our frequent and familiar guest,
Whose life and manners well could paint
Alike the student and the saint,
Alas! whose speech too oft I broke
With gambol rude and timeless[2] joke:
For I was wayward, bold, and wild,
A self-willed imp, a grandame's child,[3]
But half a plague, and half a jest,
Was still endured, beloved, caressed.

From me, thus nurtured, dost thou ask
The classic poet's well-conned[4] task?
Nay, Erskine, nay — on the wild hill
Let the wild heath-bell flourish still;
Cherish the tulip, prune the vine,
But freely let the woodbine twine,
And leave untrimmed the eglantine:
Nay, my friend, nay — since oft thy praise
Hath given fresh vigor to my lays,
Since oft thy judgment could refine
My flattened thought or cumbrous line,

[1] **Doom**: judgment, decision.
[2] **Timeless**: unseasonable; done at an improper time.
[3] **Grandame's child**: a spoiled child.
[4] **Well-conned**: carefully studied.

Still kind, as is thy wont, attend,
And in the minstrel spare the friend.
Though wild as cloud, as stream, as gale,
Flow forth, flow unrestrained, my tale!

Canto Third.

THE HOSTEL, OR INN.

I.

THE livelong[1] day Lord Marmion rode;
The mountain path the Palmer showed
By glen and streamlet winded still,
Where stunted birches hid the rill.
They might not choose the lowland road,
For the Merse[2] forayers were abroad,
Who, fired with hate and thirst of prey,
Had scarcely failed to bar the way.
Oft on the trampling band from crown
Of some tall cliff the deer looked down;
On wing of jet from his repose
In the deep heath the blackcock rose;
Sprung from the gorse[3] the timid roe,
Nor waited for the bending bow;
And when the stony path began
By which the naked peak they wan,[4]
Up flew the snowy ptarmigan.[5]

[1] **Livelong**: entire.

[2] **Merse**: a part of Southern Berwickshire, Scotland, bordering on England.

[3] **Gorse**: a low, prickly shrub which grows wild on barren lands throughout England and Scotland. It has a beautiful yellow flower.

[4] **Wan**: poetical form of won, — reached or gained.

[5] **Ptarmigan**: a bird belonging to the grouse family.

The noon had long been passed before
They gained the height of Lammermoor;[1]
Thence winding down the northern way,
Before them at the close of day
Old Gifford's[2] towers and hamlet lay.

II.

No summons calls them to the tower,
To spend the hospitable hour.
To Scotland's camp the lord was gone;
His cautious dame, in bower alone,
Dreaded her castle to unclose,
So late, to unknown friends or foes.
On through the hamlet as they paced,
Before a porch whose front was graced
With bush[3] and flagon trimly placed,
Lord Marmion drew his rein:
The village inn seemed large, though rude;
Its cheerful fire and hearty food
Might well relieve his train.
Down from their seats the horsemen sprung,
With jingling spurs the courtyard rung;
They bind their horses to the stall,
For forage, food, and firing call,
And various clamor fills the hall:

[1] **Lammermoor**: a range of hills in Southeastern Scotland, about twenty miles northeast of the English border.

[2] **Gifford**: a village just beyond the Lammermoor hills, on the road to Edinburgh.

[3] **Bush**: a branch of a tree, especially of ivy, hung out to show where wine is sold — the ivy being sacred to Bacchus, the god of wine. Such signs are still common in some parts of Europe.

Weighing the labor with the cost,
Toils everywhere the bustling host.

III.

Soon, by the chimney's merry blaze,
Through the rude hostel[1] might you gaze,
Might see where in dark nook aloof[2]
The rafters of the sooty roof
Bore wealth of winter cheer;
Of sea-fowl dried, and solands[3] store,[4]
And gammons[5] of the tusky boar,
And savory haunch of deer.
The chimney arch projected wide;
Above, around it, and beside,
Were tools for housewives' hand;
Nor wanted in that martial day,
The implements of Scottish fray,
The buckler,[6] lance, and brand.
Beneath its shade, the place of state,
On oaken settle,[7] Marmion sate,
And viewed around the blazing hearth
His followers mix in noisy mirth;
Whom with brown ale, in jolly tide,
From ancient vessels ranged aside,
Full actively their host supplied.

[1] **Hostel**: inn. [2] **Aloof**: apart, at a short distance.
[3] **Solands**: sea-fowl; the solan-goose or gannet.
[4] **Store**: generally understood to mean stored up for winter; but said by Mr. Thomas Davidson to be a Scotch word signifying strong.
[5] **Gammons**: hams.
[6] **Buckler**: a kind of shield.
[7] **Settle**: a seat or bench.

IV.

Theirs was the glee of martial breast,
And laughter theirs at little jest;
And oft Lord Marmion deigned to aid,
And mingle in the mirth they made;
For though, with men of high degree,
The proudest of the proud was he,
Yet, trained in camps, he knew the art
To win the soldier's hardy heart.
They love a captain to obey,
Boisterous as March, yet fresh as May;
With open hand and brow as free,
Lover of wine and minstrelsy;
Ever the first to scale a tower,
As venturous in a lady's bower:—
Such buxom[1] chief shall lead his host
From India's fires to Zembla's[2] frost.

V.

Resting upon his pilgrim staff,
Right opposite the Palmer stood,
His thin dark visage seen but half,
Half hidden by his hood.
Still fixed on Marmion was his look,
Which he, who ill such gaze could brook,
Strove by a frown to quell;
But not for that, though more than once
Full met their stern encountering glance,
The Palmer's visage fell.

[1] **Buxom**: gay, vigorous, jolly. [2] **Zembla**: Nova Zembla.

VI.

By fits less frequent from the crowd
Was heard the burst of laughter loud;
For still, as squire and archer stared
On that dark face and matted beard,
Their glee and game declined.
All gazed at length in silence drear,
Unbroke save when in comrade's ear
Some yeoman, wondering in his fear,
Thus whispered forth his mind:
'Saint Mary! saw'st thou e'er such sight?
How pale his cheek, his eye how bright,
Whene'er the firebrand's fickle light
Glances beneath his cowl!
Full on our lord he sets his eye;
For his best palfrey would not I
Endure that sullen scowl.'

VII.

But Marmion, as to chase the awe
Which thus had quelled their hearts who saw
The ever-varying firelight show
That figure stern and face of woe,
Now called upon a squire:
'Fitz-Eustace, know'st thou not some lay,
To speed the lingering night away?
We slumber by the fire.'

VIII.

'So please you,' thus the youth rejoined,
'Our choicest minstrel's left behind.

Ill may we hope to please your ear,
Accustomed Constant's[1] strains to hear.
The harp full deftly[2] can he strike,
And wake the lover's lute[3] alike;
To dear Saint Valentine no thrush
Sings livelier from a springtide[4] bush,
No nightingale her lovelorn[5] tune
More sweetly warbles to the moon.
Woe to the cause, whate'er it be,
Detains from us his melody,
Lavished on rocks and billows stern,
Or duller monks of Lindisfarne.
Now must I venture as I may,
To sing his favorite roundelay.'[6]

IX.

A mellow voice Fitz-Eustace had,
The air he chose was wild and sad;
Such have I heard in Scottish land
Rise from the busy harvest band,
When falls before the mountaineer
On Lowland plains the ripened ear.
Now one shrill voice the notes prolong,
Now a wild chorus swells the song:
Oft have I listened and stood still
As it came softened up the hill,
And deemed it the lament of men

[1] **Constant**: the page Constance (see Canto I., XV. and Canto II., XX.).
[2] **Deftly**: skilfully.
[3] **Lute**: a kind of guitar.
[4] **Springtide**: spring season.
[5] **Lovelorn**: forsaken by one's love.
[6] **Roundelay**: a kind of song.

Who languished for their native glen,
And thought how sad would be such sound
On Susquehanna's swampy ground,
Kentucky's wood-encumbered brake,
Or wild Ontario's boundless lake,
Where heart-sick exiles in the strain
Recalled fair Scotland's hills again!

X.

SONG.

Where shall the lover rest,
Whom the fates sever
From his true maiden's breast,
Parted forever?
Where, through groves deep and high,
Sounds the far billow,
Where early violets die,
Under the willow.

CHORUS.

Eleu loro, etc. Soft shall be his pillow.

There, through the summer day,
Cool streams are laving;
There, while the tempests sway,
Scarce are boughs waving;
There thy rest shalt thou take,
Parted forever,
Never again to wake,
Never, O never!

CHORUS.

Eleu loro, etc. Never, O never!

XI.

Where shall the traitor rest,
He the deceiver,
Who could win maiden's breast,
Ruin and leave her?
In the lost battle,
Borne down by the flying,
Where mingles war's rattle
With groans of the dying.

CHORUS.

Eleu loro, etc. There shall he be lying.

Her wing shall the eagle flap
O'er the false-hearted;
His warm blood the wolf shall lap,
Ere life be parted.
Shame and dishonor sit
By his grave ever;
Blessing shall hallow it, —
Never, O never!

CHORUS.

Eleu loro, etc. Never, O never!

XII.

It ceased, the melancholy sound,
And silence sunk on all around.

The air was sad; but sadder still
It fell on Marmion's ear,
And plained[1] as if disgrace and ill,
And shameful death were near.
He drew his mantle past his face,
Between it and the band,
And rested with his head a space
Reclining on his hand.
His thoughts I scan not; but I ween
That, could their import have been seen,
The meanest groom in all the hall,
That e'er tied courser to a stall,
Would scarce have wished to be their prey,
For Lutterward and Fontenaye.

XIII.

High minds, of native pride and force,
Most deeply feel thy pangs, Remorse!
Fear for their scourge mean villains have,
Thou art the torturer of the brave!
Yet fatal strength they boast to steel
Their minds to bear the wounds they feel,
Even while they writhe beneath the smart
Of civil conflict in the heart.
For soon Lord Marmion raised his head,
And smiling to Fitz-Eustace said:
'Is it not strange that, as ye sung,
Seemed in mine ear a death-peal[2] rung,
Such as in nunneries they toll
For some departing sister's soul?

[1] **Plained**: lamented, wailed. [2] **Death-peal** (see Canto II., xxxiii.).

Say, what may this portend?'
Then first the Palmer silence broke, —
The livelong day he had not spoke, —
'The death of a dear friend.'

XIV.

Marmion, whose steady heart and eye
Ne'er changed in worst extremity,
Marmion, whose soul could scantly brook
Even from his king a haughty look,
Whose accent of command controlled
In camps the boldest of the bold —
Thought, look, and utterance failed him now,
Fallen was his glance and flushed his brow;
For either in the tone,
Or something in the Palmer's look,
So full upon his conscience strook[1]
That answer he found none.
Thus oft it haps[2] that when within
They shrink at sense of secret sin,
A feather daunts the brave;
A fool's wild speech confounds the wise,
And proudest princes vail[3] their eyes
Before their meanest slave.

XV.

Well might he falter! — By his aid
Was Constance Beverley betrayed.
Not that he augured[4] of the doom

[1] **Strook**: struck.
[2] **Haps**: happens.
[3] **Vail**: cast down.
[4] **Augured**: guessed, conjectured.

Which on the living closed the tomb:
But, tired to hear the desperate maid
Threaten by turns, beseech, upbraid,
And wroth because in wild despair
She practised[1] on the life of Clare,[2]
Its fugitive the Church he gave,
Though not a victim, but a slave,
And deemed restraint in convent strange
Would hide her wrongs and her revenge.
Himself, proud Henry's[3] favorite peer,
Held Romish thunders idle fear;
Secure his pardon he might hold
For some slight mulct[4] of penance-gold.
Thus judging, he gave secret way
When the stern priests surprised their prey.
His train but deemed the favorite page
Was left behind to spare his age;
Or other, if they deemed, none dared
To mutter what he thought and heard:
Woe to the vassal who durst pry
Into Lord Marmion's privacy!

XVI.

His conscience slept — he deemed her well,
And safe secured in distant cell;
But, wakened by her favorite lay,
And that strange Palmer's boding[5] say[6]

[1] **Practised**: plotted.
[2] **Clare**: Clara (see Canto II., xxvii.).
[3] **Henry**: Henry VIII. of England.
[4] **Mulct**: fine.
[5] **Boding**: foreboding, threatening evil.
[6] **Say**: speech (see page 103, line 217).

That fell so ominous and drear
Full on the object of his fear,
To aid remorse's venome throes,
Dark tales of convent-vengeance rose;
And Constance, late betrayed and scorned,
All lovely on his soul returned;
Lovely as when at treacherous call
She left her convent's peaceful wall,
Crimsoned with shame, with terror mute,
Dreading alike escape, pursuit,
Till love, victorious o'er alarms,
Hid fears and blushes in his arms.

XVII.

'Alas!' he thought, 'how changed that mien![1]
How changed these timid looks have been,
Since years of guilt and of disguise
Have steeled her brow and armed her eyes!
No more of virgin terror speaks
The blood that mantles in her cheeks,
Fierce and unfeminine are there,
Frenzy for joy, for grief despair,
And I the cause — for whom were given
Her peace on earth, her hop in heaven! —
Would,' thought he, as the picture grows,
'I on its stalk had left the rose!
Oh, why should man's success remove
The very charms that wake his love? —
Her convent's peaceful solitude
Is now a prison harsh and rude;

[1] **Mien**: appearance, look.

And, pent within the narrow cell,
How will her spirit chafe and swell!
How brook the stern monastic laws!
The penance how — and I the cause! —
Vigil and scourge — perchance even worse!' —
And twice he rose to cry, 'To horse!'
And twice his sovereign's mandate [1] came,
Like damp upon a kindling flame;
And twice he thought, 'Gave I not charge
She should be safe, though not at large?
They durst not, for their island, shred
One golden ringlet from her head.'

XVIII.

While thus in Marmion's bosom strove
Repentance and reviving love,
Like whirlwinds whose contending sway
I've seen Loch Vennachar [2] obey,
Their host the Palmer's speech had heard,
And talkative took up the word:
'Ay, reverend pilgrim, you who stray
From Scotland's simple land away,
To visit realms afar,
Full often learn the art to know
Of future weal or future woe,
By word, or sign, or star; [3]

[1] **Mandate**: the king's command sending him without delay to Edinburgh.

[2] **Loch Vennachar**: an expansion of the beautiful river Teith, in Perthshire, Central Scotland. Scott took the scenery of the *Lady of the Lake* from this neighborhood.

[3] **Star**: i.e., by astrology, then believed to be a science. It still finds occasional dupes to waste their money on its pretended predictions.

Yet might a knight his fortune hear,
If, knight-like, he despises fear,
Not far from hence — if fathers old
Aright our hamlet legend told.'
These broken words the menials move, —
For marvels still the vulgar love, —
And, Marmion giving license cold,
His tale the host thus gladly told: —

XIX.

THE HOST'S TALE.

'A clerk[1] could tell what years have flown
Since Alexander[2] filled our throne, —
Third monarch of that warlike name, —
And eke[3] the time when here he came
To seek Sir Hugo, then our lord:
A braver never drew a sword;
A wiser never, at the hour
Of midnight, spoke the word of power;[4]
The same whom ancient records call
The founder of the Goblin-Hall.[5]
I would, Sir Knight,[6] your longer stay
Gave you[7] that cavern to survey.

[1] **Clerk**: scholar, man of letters, a name originally given to a clergyman.
[2] **Alexander**: Alexander III., King of Scotland, 1249–1286.
[3] **Eke**: also.
[4] **Power**: magical power.
[5] **Goblin-Hall**: "a vaulted hall," says Scott, "under the ancient castle of Gifford." It was said to have been constructed by magical art, and was called in the country, "Bo-Hall, that is, Hobgoblin Hall."
[6] **Sir Knight**: Sir, a title of honor given to a knight.
[7] **Gave you**: gave you time.

Of lofty roof and ample size,
Beneath the castle deep it lies:
To hew the living rock profound,
The floor to pave, the arch to round,
There never toiled a mortal arm,
It all was wrought by word and charm;
And I have heard my grandsire say
That the wild clamor and affray
Of those dread artisans of hell,
Who labored under Hugo's spell,
Sounded as loud as ocean's war
Among the caverns of Dunbar.

XX.

'The king Lord Gifford's castle sought,
Deep laboring with uncertain thought.
Even then he mustered all his host,
To meet upon the western coast;
For Norse [1] and Danish galleys plied
Their oars within the Firth of Clyde.
There floated Haco's [2] banner trim
Above Norweyan [3] warriors grim,
Savage of heart and large of limb,
Threatening both continent and isle,
Bute,[4] Arran, Cunninghame, and Kyle.
Lord Gifford, deep beneath the ground,

[1] **Norse**: Norwegian, Scandinavian.

[2] **Haco**: Haco, King of Norway, entered the Firth of Clyde, 1263, and attacked the Scots, but was defeated by Alexander III.

[3] **Norweyan**: Norwegian.

[4] **Bute, etc.**: parts of Scotland bordering on or very near the Firth of Clyde.

Heard Alexander's bugle sound,
And tarried not his garb to change,
But, in his wizard habit strange,
Came forth, — a quaint and fearful sight:
His mantle lined with fox-skins white;
His high and wrinkled forehead bore
A pointed cap, such as of yore
Clerks say that Pharaoh's Magi[1] wore;
His shoes were marked with cross and spell,
Upon his breast a pentacle;[2]
His zone[3] of virgin parchment thin,
Or, as some tell, of dead man's skin,
Bore many a planetary sign,
Combust, and retrograde, and trine;[4]
And in his hand he held prepared
A naked sword without a guard.[5]

XXI.

'Dire dealings with the fiendish race
Had marked strange lines upon his face;
Vigil and fast had worn him grim,
His eyesight dazzled seemed and dim,
As one unused to upper day;
Even his own menials with dismay

[1] **Magi**: "wise men," magicians.

[2] **Pentacle**: a five-cornered piece of linen inscribed with magical characters. The magician extended the pentacle toward rebellious spirits in order to force them to do his will.

[3] **Zone**: girdle.

[4] **Combust, retrograde, and trine**: astrological terms describing certain positions, (combust, very near the sun,) apparent movements and aspects of the planets.

[5] **Guard**: a part of the hilt of a sword which protects the hand.

Beheld, Sir Knight, the grisly sire
In this unwonted wild attire;
Unwonted, for traditions run
He seldom thus beheld the sun.
"I know," he said, — his voice was hoarse,
And broken seemed its hollow force, —
"I know the cause, although untold,
Why the king seeks his vassal's hold:
Vainly from me my liege[1] would know
His kingdom's future weal or woe;
But yet, if strong his arm and heart,
His courage may do more than art.

XXII.

'"Of middle air the demons proud,
Who ride upon the racking[2] cloud,
Can read in fixed or wandering star
The issue of events afar,
But still their sullen aid withhold,
Save when by mightier force controlled.
Such late I summoned to my hall;
And though so potent was the call
That scarce the deepest nook of hell
I deemed a refuge from the spell,
Yet, obstinate in silence still,
The haughty demon mocks my skill.
But thou, — who little know'st thy might
As born upon that blessed night[3]

[1] **Liege**: here, sovereign.
[2] **Racking**: broken, flying (clouds).
[3] **Blessed night**: referring to the belief, once prevalent, that those who

When yawning graves and dying groan
Proclaimed hell's empire overthrown, —
With untaught valor shall compel
Response denied to magic spell."
"Gramercy!" quoth our monarch free,
"Place him but front to front with me,
And, by this good and honored brand,
The gift of Cœur-de-Lion's [1] hand,
Soothly [2] I swear that, tide what tide,[3]
The demon shall a buffet bide." [4]
His bearing bold the wizard viewed,
And thus, well pleased, his speech renewed:
"There spoke the blood of Malcolm! [5] — mark:
Forth pacing hence at midnight dark,
The rampart seek whose circling crown
Crests the ascent of yonder down:
A southern entrance shalt thou find;
There halt, and there thy bugle wind,[6]
And trust thine elfin foe to see
In guise of thy worst enemy.
Couch then thy lance and spur thy steed —
Upon him! and Saint George to speed! [7]
If he go down, thou soon shalt know

were born on Christmas or Good Friday (the day of Christ's crucifixion) had the power of seeing and commanding spirits.

[1] **Cœur-de-Lion**: Richard Cœur-de-Lion, or the lion-hearted, King of England, 1189–1199.

[2] **Soothly**: truly.

[3] **Tide what tide**: happen what may.

[4] **Buffet bide**: have to bear a blow.

[5] **Malcolm**: Alexander III. was a descendant of Malcolm IV. — all the kings of that family were noted for their warlike deeds.

[6] **Wind**: blow.

[7] **To speed**: may St. George speed you (aid you) in the combat.

Whate'er these airy sprites can show;
If thy heart fail thee in the strife,
I am no warrant for thy life."

XXIII.

'Soon as the midnight bell did ring,
Alone and armed, forth rode the king,
To that old camp's deserted round.
Sir Knight, you well might mark the mound
Left hand the town, — the Pictish [1] race
The trench, long since, in blood did trace;
The moor around is brown and bare,
The space within is green and fair.
The spot our village children know,
For there the earliest wild-flowers grow;
But woe betide the wandering wight [2]
That treads its circle in the night!
The breadth across, a bowshot clear,
Gives ample space for full career; [3]
Opposed to the four points of heaven,
By four deep gaps are entrance given.
The southernmost our monarch passed,
Halted, and blew a gallant blast;
And on the north, within the ring,
Appeared the form of England's king, [4]
Who then a thousand leagues afar,

[1] **Pictish**: pertaining to the Picts, a race of people who inhabited a part of Scotland in very ancient times.

[2] **Wight**: human being, person.

[3] **Full career**: full attack for mounted combatants.

[4] **King**: Edward I.; called "Longshanks" from his "length of limb"; in 1296 he temporarily conquered Scotland.

In Palestine waged holy war:
Yet arms like England's did he wield;
Alike the leopards[1] in the shield,
Alike his Syrian courser's frame,
The rider's length of limb the same.
Long afterwards did Scotland know
Fell[2] Edward was her deadliest foe.

XXIV.

'The vision made our monarch start,
But soon he manned his noble heart,
And in the first career they ran,
The Elfin Knight fell, horse and man;
Yet did a splinter of his lance
Through Alexander's visor[3] glance,
And razed the skin — a puny wound.
The king, light leaping to the ground,
With naked blade his phantom foe
Compelled the future war to show.
Of Largs[4] he saw the glorious plain,
Where still gigantic bones remain,
Memorial of the Danish war;
Himself he saw, amid the field,
On high his brandished war-axe wield
And strike proud Haco[5] from his car,

[1] **Leopards**: referring to the three leopards (or lions) in two of the quarters or divisions of the royal standard and coat-of-arms of England.
[2] **Fell**: cruel, savage.
[3] **Visor**: that part of a helmet which defends the face.
[4] **Largs**: in 1263 King Alexander defeated Haco, the Norwegian invader, at Largs, a seaport on the Firth of Clyde.
[5] **Haco**: see note 4, above.

While around the shadowy kings
Denmark's grim ravens[1] cowered their wings.
'Tis said that in that awful night
Remoter visions met his sight,
Foreshowing future conquest far,
When our sons' sons wage Northern war;
A royal city, tower and spire,
Reddened the midnight sky with fire,
And shouting crews her navy bore
Triumphant to the victor shore.
Such signs may learned clerks explain,
They pass the wit[2] of simple swain.

XXV.

'The joyful king turned home again,
Headed his host, and quelled the Dane;
But yearly, when returned the night
Of his strange combat with the sprite,[3]
His wound must bleed and smart;
Lord Gifford then would gibing[4] say,
"Bold as ye were, my liege, ye pay
The penance of your start."[5]
Long since, beneath Dunfermline's nave,[6]

[1] **Ravens**: the raven, the symbol of the Danes, was represented on the battle-flags and the sails of their war-vessels. The name of Dane was not confined to the inhabitants of Denmark, but was often given to the Northmen generally.

[2] **Pass the wit**: are above the understanding.

[3] **Sprite**: here, spirit or apparition.

[4] **Gibing**: gibingly, in a taunting manner.

[5] **Start**: rash act.

[6] **Dunfermline's nave**: the nave, or central part, of the ancient abbey of Dunfermline, thirteen miles northwest of Edinburgh.

King Alexander fills his grave,
Our Lady give him rest!
Yet still the knightly spear and shield
The Elfin Warrior doth wield
Upon the brown hill's breast,
And many a knight hath proved his chance
In the charmed ring to break a lance,
But all have foully sped;[1]
Save two, as legends tell, and they
Were Wallace wight and Gilbert Hay.[2] —
Gentles, my tale is said.'

XXVI.

The quaighs[3] were deep, the liquor strong,
And on the tale the yeoman-throng
Had made a comment sage and long,
But Marmion gave a sign:
And with their lord the squires retire,
The rest around the hostel fire
Their drowsy limbs recline;
For pillow, underneath each head,
The quiver and the targe[4] were laid.
Deep slumbering on the hostel floor,
Oppressed with toil and ale, they snore;

[1] **Have foully sped**: have met with misfortune or disaster.

[2] **Gilbert Hay**: this appears to have been Sir Gilbert Hay, or de la Haye, of Errol. He was one of the chief adherents of Robert Bruce when, in 1305, that hero determined to rise against Edward I., — the English conqueror of Scotland, — and to free his country from foreign rule. See Tytler's *Scotland*, I., 230.

[3] **Quaighs**: wooden drinking-cups.

[4] **Targe**: a small, round shield made of ox-hide.

The dying flame, in fitful change,
Threw on the group its shadows strange.

XXVII.

Apart, and nestling in the hay
Of a waste loft, Fitz-Eustace lay;
Scarce by the pale moonlight were seen
The foldings of his mantle green:
Lightly he dreamt, as youth will dream,
Of sport by thicket, or by stream,
Of hawk or hound, or ring or glove,
Or, lighter yet, of lady's love.
A cautious tread his slumber broke,
And, close beside him when he woke,
In moonbeam half, and half in gloom,
Stood a tall form with nodding plume;
But, ere his dagger Eustace drew,
His master Marmion's voice he knew:

XXVIII.

'Fitz-Eustace! rise, — I cannot rest;
Yon churl's wild legend haunts my breast,
And graver thoughts have chafed my mood;
The air must cool my feverish blood,
And fain would I ride forth to see
The scene of elfin chivalry.
Arise, and saddle me my steed;
And, gentle Eustace, take good heed
Thou dost not rouse these drowsy slaves;
I would not that the prating knaves

Had cause for saying, o'er their ale,
That I could credit such a tale.'
Then softly down the steps they slid,
Eustace the stable door undid,
And, darkling,[1] Marmion's steed arrayed,
While, whispering, thus the baron said: —

XXIX.

'Didst never, good my youth, hear tell
That on the hour when I was born
Saint George, who graced my sire's chapelle,[2]
Down from his steed of marble fell,
A weary wight forlorn?
The flattering chaplains all agree
The champion left his steed to me.
I would, the omen's truth to show,
That I could meet this elfin foe!
Blithe would I battle for the right
To ask one question at the sprite. —
Vain thought! for elves, if elves there be,
An empty race, by fount or sea
To dashing waters dance and sing,
Or round the green oak wheel their ring.'
Thus speaking, he his steed bestrode,
And from the hostel slowly rode.

XXX.

Fitz-Eustace followed him abroad,
And marked him pace the village road,

[1] **Darkling**: in the dark.
[2] **Chapelle**: a chapel, especially a recess in a church dedicated to some saint.

And listened to his horse's tramp,
Till, by the lessening sound,
He judged that of the Pictish camp
Lord Marmion sought the round.
Wonder it seemed, in the squire's eyes,
That one, so wary held and wise, —
Of whom 'twas said, he scarce received
For gospel what the Church believed, —
Should, stirred by idle tale,
Ride forth in silence of the night,
As hoping half to meet a sprite,
Arrayed in plate and mail.
For little did Fitz-Eustace know
That passions in contending flow
Unfix the strongest mind;
Wearied from doubt to doubt to flee,
We welcome fond[1] credulity,
Guide confident, though blind.

XXXI.

Little for this Fitz-Eustace cared,
But patient waited till he heard
At distance, pricked to utmost speed,
The foot-tramp of a flying steed
Come townward rushing on;
First, dead, as if on turf it trode,
Then, clattering on the village road, —
In other pace than forth he yode,[2]
Returned Lord Marmion.

[1] **Fond**: foolish.

[2] **Yode**: went.

Down hastily he sprung from selle,[1]
And in his haste wellnigh he fell;
To the squire's hand the rein he threw,
And spoke no word as he withdrew:
But yet the moonlight did betray
The falcon-crest was soiled with clay;
And plainly might Fitz-Eustace see,
By stains upon the charger's knee
And his left side, that on the moor
He had not kept his footing sure.
Long musing on these wondrous signs,
At length to rest the squire reclines,
Broken and short; for still between
Would dreams of terror intervene:
Eustace did ne'er so blithely mark
The first notes of the morning lark.

[1] **Selle**: saddle.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO FOURTH.

To JAMES SKENE, Esq.[1]

Ashestiel, Ettrick Forest.

An aged Minstrel sagely said,
'Where is the life[2] which late we led?'
That motley[3] clown in Arden wood,[4]
Whom humorous[5] Jaques[6] with envy viewed,
Not even that clown could amplify
On this trite[7] text so long as I.
Eleven years we now may tell
Since we have known each other well,
Since, riding side by side, our hand
First drew the voluntary brand;
And sure, through many a varied scene,

[1] **James Skene, Esq.**: he was in the Royal Edinburgh Light Horse Volunteers, of which Scott was Quartermaster,—that office having been selected for Scott in order that (on account of his lameness) he might be spared the rough usage of the ranks.

[2] "**Where is the life**": an adaptation of a line of a ballad quoted by Shakespeare, in *The Taming of the Shrew*, Act IV., scene i., and in *2 Henry IV.*, Act V., scene iii.

[3] **Motley**: a bright, parti-colored dress, like that of a circus clown, worn by professional jesters or fools; the word is also sometimes used in the sense of incoherent.

[4] **Arden wood**: the Forest of Arden in the North of France (see *As You Like It*, Act II., scene i.).

[5] **Humorous**: here, melancholy,—"the melancholy Jaques" (see *As You Like It*, Act II., scene i.).

[6] **Jaques**: a character in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, Act II., scene vii.

[7] **Trite**: commonplace.

Unkindness never came between.
Away these winged years have flown,
To join the mass of ages gone;
And though deep marked, like all below,
With checkered shades of joy and woe,
Though thou o'er realms and seas hast ranged,
Marked cities lost and empires changed,
While here at home my narrower ken
Somewhat of manners saw and men;
Though varying wishes, hopes, and fears
Fevered the progress of these years,
Yet now, days, weeks, and months but seem
The recollection of a dream,
So still we glide down to the sea
Of fathomless eternity.

Even now it scarcely seems a day
Since first I tuned this idle lay;
A task so often thrown aside,
When leisure graver cares denied,
That now November's dreary gale,
Whose voice inspired my opening tale,
That same November gale once more
Whirls the dry leaves on Yarrow shore.
Their vexed boughs streaming to the sky,
Once more our naked birches sigh,
And Blackhouse heights and Ettrick Pen[1]
Have donned their wintry shrouds again,

[1] **Blackhouse heights** — a range of hills dividing the upper valley of the Yarrow from that of the Tweed — **and Ettrick Pen** (a commanding hill further south) are both within a range of about twenty miles southwest of Scott's residence at Ashestiel.

And mountain dark and flooded mead
Bid us forsake the banks of Tweed.
Earlier than wont along the sky,
Mixed with the rack,[1] the snow mists fly;
The shepherd who, in summer sun,
Had something of our envy won,
As thou with pencil, I with pen,
The features traced of hill and glen, —
He who, outstretched the livelong day,
At ease among the heath-flowers lay,
Viewed the light clouds with vacant look,
Or slumbered o'er his tattered book,
Or idly busied him to guide
His angle[2] o'er the lessened tide, —
At midnight now the snowy plain
Finds sterner labor for the swain.

When red hath set the beamless sun
Through heavy vapors dank and dun,
When the tired ploughman, dry and warm,
Hears, half asleep, the rising storm
Hurling the hail and sleeted rain
Against the casement's tinkling pane;
The sounds that drive wild deer and fox
To shelter in the brake and rocks
Are warnings which the shepherd ask
To dismal and to dangerous task.
Oft he looks forth, and hopes, in vain,
The blast may sink in mellowing rain;

[1] **Rack**: thin, flying, broken clouds. [2] **Angle**: a fishing-rod.

Till, dark above and white below,
Decided drives the flaky snow,
And forth the hardy swain must go.
Long, with dejected look and whine,
To leave the hearth his dogs repine;
Whistling and cheering them to aid,
Around his back he wreathes the plaid:
His flock he gathers and he guides
To open downs and mountain-sides,
Where fiercest though the tempest blow,
Least deeply lies the drift below.
The blast that whistles o'er the fells
Stiffens his locks to icicles;
Oft he looks back while, streaming far,
His cottage window seems a star, —
Loses its feeble gleam, — and then
Turns patient to the blast again,
And, facing to the tempest's sweep,
Drives through the gloom his lagging sheep.
If fails his heart, if his limbs fail,
Benumbing death is in the gale;
His paths, his landmarks, all unknown,
Close to the hut, no more his own,
Close to the aid he sought in vain,
The morn may find the stiffened swain:
The widow sees, at dawning pale,
His orphans raise their feeble wail;
And, close beside him in the snow,
Poor Yarrow, partner of their woe,
Couches upon his master's breast,
And licks his cheek to break his rest.

Who envies now the shepherd's lot,
His healthy fare, his rural cot,
His summer couch by greenwood tree,
His rustic kirn's[1] loud revelry,
His native hill-notes tuned on high
To Marion of the blithesome eye,
His crook,[2] his scrip, his oaten reed,[3]
And all Arcadia's golden creed?[4]

Changes not so with us, my Skene,
Of human life the varying scene?
Our youthful summer oft we see
Dance by on wings of game and glee,
While the dark storm reserves its rage
Against the winter of our age;
As he, the ancient chief of Troy,
His manhood spent in peace and joy,
But Grecian fires and loud alarms
Called ancient Priam[5] forth to arms.
Then happy those, since each must drain
His share of pleasure, share of pain, —
Then happy those, beloved of Heaven,
To whom the mingled cup is given;
Whose lenient sorrows find relief,

[1] **Kirn**: the Scottish Harvest-home, a feast celebrated at the end of the harvest.

[2] **Crook**: a shepherd's staff, curved at the end.

[3] **Oaten reed**: a shepherd's pipe, or flute, made of oaten straw.

[4] **Arcadia's golden creed**: the simple, rustic merriment which characterized the shepherds of Arcadia in ancient Greece.

[5] **Priam**: king of Troy, Asia Minor, who fought to defend his realm against the attack of the Greeks; the war is the subject of the *Iliad;* and of part of the *Æneid.*

Whose joys are chastened by their grief.
And such a lot, my Skene, was thine,
When thou of late wert doomed to twine —
Just when thy bridal hour was by —
The cypress with the myrtle[1] tie.
Just on thy bride her sire had smiled,
And blessed the union of his child,
When love must change its joyous cheer,
And wipe affection's filial tear.
Nor did the actions next his end
Speak more the father than the friend:
Scarce had lamented Forbes[2] paid
The tribute to his minstrel's shade,
The tale of friendship scarce was told,
Ere the narrator's heart was cold —
Far may we search before we find
A heart so manly and so kind!
But not around his honored urn[3]
Shall friends alone and kindred mourn;
The thousand eyes his care had dried
Pour at his name a bitter tide,
And frequent falls the grateful dew
For benefits the world ne'er knew.
If mortal charity dare claim
The Almighty's attributed name,

[1] **Cypress with the myrtle**: the cypress has long been considered an emblem of death; the myrtle is still used for bridal wreaths.

[2] **Forbes** (Scottish pronunciation, For'bes): Sir William Forbes, of Pitsligo, Scotland. He wrote a life of the Scottish poet, James Beattie, and died not long after its publication. Scott's friend Skene married one of Sir William's daughters.

[3] **Urn**: here used for grave; the ancients kept the ashes of their dead in urns.

Inscribe above his mouldering clay,
'The widow's shield, the orphan's stay.'
Nor, though it wake thy sorrow, deem
My verse intrudes on this sad theme,
For sacred was the pen that wrote,
'Thy father's friend forget thou not';
And grateful title may I plead,
For many a kindly word and deed,
To bring my tribute to his grave: —
'Tis little — but 'tis all I have.

To thee, perchance, this rambling strain
Recalls our summer walks again;
When, doing nought, — and, to speak true,
Not anxious to find aught[1] to do, —
The wild unbounded hills we ranged,
While oft our talk its topic changed,
And, desultory as our way,
Ranged unconfined from grave to gay.
Even when it flagged, as oft will chance,
No effort made to break its trance,
We could right pleasantly pursue
Our sports in social silence too;
Thou gravely laboring to portray
The blighted oak's fantastic spray,
I spelling o'er with much delight
The legend of that antique knight,
Tirante[2] by name, ycleped[3] the White.

[1] **Aught**: anything.

[2] **Tirante**: the romance of *Tirante the White*, written by a Spanish knight, and printed in 1480.

[3] **Ycleped**: called.

At either's feet a trusty squire,[1]
Pandour and Camp, with eyes of fire,
Jealous each other's motions viewed,
And scarce suppressed their ancient feud.
The laverock[2] whistled from the cloud;
The stream was lively, but not loud;
From the white thorn the May-flower[3] shed
Its dewy fragrance round our head:
Not Ariel[4] lived more merrily
Under the blossomed bough than we.

And blithesome nights, too, have been ours,
When Winter stript the Summer's bowers.
Careless we heard, what now I hear,
The wild blast sighing deep and drear,
When fires were bright and lamps beamed gay,
And ladies tuned the lovely lay,
And he was held a laggard[5] soul
Who shunned to quaff the sparkling bowl.
Then he[6] whose absence we deplore,
Who breathes the gales of Devon's shore,
The longer missed, bewailed the more,
And thou, and I, and dear-loved R——[7]

[1] **Squire**: here, a dog. "Camp" was the name of a favorite bull-terrier of Scott's; "Pandour" was presumably his friend Skene's dog.

[2] **Laverock**: the lark.

[3] **May-flower**: the "may," or hawthorn; so called because it blooms in May.

[4] **Ariel**: the "tricksy spirit" that appears as one of the characters in Shakespeare's *Tempest* (see Act V., scene i.). Scott's words are almost a quotation of those of Ariel's.

[5] **Laggard**: sluggish, spiritless.

[6] **He**: Colin Mackenzie, Esq.; he was clerk of the Supreme Civil Court of Scotland, and a particular friend of the poet's.

[7] **R——**: Sir William Rae, later Lord Advocate of Scotland, was a member of the volunteer corps to which Scott belonged.

And one [1] whose name I may not say, —
For not mimosa's [2] tender tree
Shrinks sooner from the touch than he, —
In merry chorus well combined,
With laughter drowned the whistling wind.
Mirth was within, and Care without
Might gnaw her nails to hear our shout.
Not but amid the buxom scene
Some grave discourse might intervene —
Of the good horse that bore him best,
His shoulder, hoof, and arching crest;
For, like mad Tom's,[3] our chiefest care
Was horse to ride and weapon wear.
Such nights we've had; and, though the game
Of manhood be more sober tame,
And though the field-day or the drill
Seem less important now, yet still
Such may we hope to share again.
The sprightly thought inspires my strain!
And mark how, like a horseman true,
Lord Marmion's march I thus renew.

[1] **One**: Sir William Forbes, son of the Sir William mentioned on page 125, note 2. Skene, Mackenzie, Rae, Forbes, and Scott, with a few others, had formed themselves into a little club.

[2] **Mimosa**: the sensitive plant.

[3] **Mad Tom**: Edgar, son of the Earl of Gloster, disguised as a lunatic or fool, but who hath had "horse to ride, and weapon to wear." See *King Lear*.

Canto Fourth.

THE CAMP.

I.

EUSTACE, I said, did blithely mark
The first notes of the merry lark.
The lark sang shrill, the cock he crew,
And loudly Marmion's bugles blew,
And with their light and lively call
Brought groom and yeoman to the stall.
Whistling they came and free of heart,
But soon their mood was changed;
Complaint was heard on every part
Of something disarranged.
Some clamored loud for armor lost;
Some brawled and wrangled with the host;
'By Becket's bones,'[1] cried one, 'I fear
That some false Scot has stolen my spear!'
Young Blount, Lord Marmion's second squire,
Found his steed wet with sweat and mire,
Although the rated[2] horseboy sware
Last night he dressed him sleek and fair.
While chafed the impatient squire like thunder,
Old Hubert shouts, in fear and wonder, —

[1] **Becket's bones**: St. Thomas à Becket; his shrine was in the cathedral at Canterbury, and was visited by thousands of pilgrims yearly.
[2] **Rated**: scolded.

'Help, gentle Blount! help, comrades all!
Bevis lies dying in his stall;
To Marmion who the plight dare tell
Of the good steed he loves so well?'
Gaping for fear and ruth, they saw
The charger panting on his straw;
Till one, who would seem wisest, cried,
'What else but evil could betide,
With that cursed Palmer for our guide?
Better we had through mire and bush
Been lantern-led by Friar Rush.'[1]

II.

Fitz-Eustace, who the cause but guessed,
Nor wholly understood,
His comrades' clamorous plaints suppressed;
He knew Lord Marmion's mood.
Him, ere he issued forth, he sought,
And found deep plunged in gloomy thought,
And did his tale display
Simply, as if he knew of nought
To cause such disarray.
Lord Marmion gave attention cold,
Nor marvelled at the wonders told, —
Passed them as accidents of course,
And bade his clarions[2] sound to horse.

[1] **Friar Rush**: the Will-o'-the-wisp, a dancing, flitting light which appears chiefly in marshy places; this light was once supposed to be the work of a tricksy spirit who amused himself by leading travellers astray through mud and mire.

[2] **Clarions**: shrill-sounding trumpets, used to give signals.

III.

Young Henry Blount, meanwhile, the cost
Had reckoned with their Scottish host;
And, as the charge he cast and paid,
'Ill thou deserv'st thy hire,' he said;
'Dost see, thou knave, my horse's plight?
Fairies have ridden him all the night,
And left him in a foam!
I trust that soon a conjuring band,
With English cross and blazing brand,
Shall drive the devils from this land
To their infernal home;
For in this haunted den, I trow,
All night they trampled to and fro.'
The laughing host looked on the hire:
'Gramercy, gentle southern[1] squire,
And if thou com'st among the rest,
With Scottish broadsword to be blest,
Sharp be the brand, and sure the blow,
And short the pang to undergo.'
Here stayed their talk, for Marmion
Gave now the signal to set on.
The Palmer showing forth the way,
They journeyed all the morning-day.

IV.

The greensward way was smooth and good,
Through Humbie's and through Saltoun's wood;[2]

[1] **Southern**: here, equivalent to English.

[2] **Humbie's and Saltoun's wood**: they are not far from Gifford, on the way to Edinburgh.

A forest glade, which, varying still,
Here gave a view of dale and hill,
There narrower closed till overhead
A vaulted screen the branches made.
'A pleasant path,' Fitz-Eustace said;
'Such as where errant-knights[1] might see
Adventures of high chivalry,
Might meet some damsel flying fast,
With hair unbound and looks aghast;
And smooth and level course were here,
In her defence to break a spear.
Here, too, are twilight nooks and dells;
And oft in such, the story tells,
The damsel kind, from danger freed,
Did grateful pay her champion's meed.'
He spoke to cheer Lord Marmion's mind,
Perchance to show his lore designed;
For Eustace much had pored
Upon a huge romantic tome,[2]
In the hall-window of his home,
Imprinted at the antique dome
Of Caxton or de Worde.[3]
Therefore he spoke, — but spoke in vain,
For Marmion answered nought again.

[1] **Errant-knights**: knights roving about in search of adventure.

[2] **Tome**: volume.

[3] **Caxton or de Worde**: William Caxton, the first English printer (1422?–1491). He set up his press in 1477, within the precincts of Westminster Abbey. Wynkin de Worde, his assistant and successor, dated many of his books, "In domo Caxton,"— that is, from Caxton's "dome" or house. On Nov. 18, 1477, Caxton published "The Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers." This was undoubtedly the first book printed in England. A copy of this most interesting work is preserved in Lord Spencer's library at Althorpe, and a later edition is found in the British Museum.

V.

Now sudden, distant trumpets shrill,
In notes prolonged by wood and hill,
Were heard to echo far;
Each ready archer grasped his bow,
But by the flourish soon they know
They breathed no point[1] of war.
Yet cautious, as in foeman's land,
Lord Marmion's order speeds the band
Some opener ground to gain;
And scarce a furlong had they rode,
When thinner trees receding showed
A little woodland plain.
Just in that advantageous glade[2]
The halting troop a line had made,
As forth from the opposing shade
Issued a gallant train.

VI.

First came the trumpets, at whose clang
So late the forest echoes rang;
On prancing steeds they forward pressed,
With scarlet mantle, azure vest;
Each at his trump a banner wore,
Which Scotland's royal scutcheon bore:
Heralds and pursuivants, by name
Bute, Islay, Marchmount, Rothsay, came,
In painted tabards, proudly showing

[1] **Point**: signal.
[2] **Glade**: an opening in the woods.

Gules, argent, or, and azure[1] glowing,
Attendant on a king-at-arms,[2]
Whose hand the armorial truncheon[3] held
That feudal strife had often quelled
When wildest its alarms.

VII.

He was a man of middle age,
In aspect manly, grave, and sage,
As on king's errand come;
But in the glances of his eye
A penetrating, keen, and sly
Expression found its home;
The flash of that satiric rage
Which, bursting on the early stage,
Branded the vices of the age,
And broke the keys of Rome.
On milk-white palfrey forth he paced;
His cap of maintenance[4] was graced
With the proud heron-plume.
From his steed's shoulder, loin, and breast,
Silk housings swept the ground,
With Scotland's arms, device,[5] and crest,[6]

[1] **Gules, argent, or, and azure**: the colors (red, silver, gold, and blue) displayed on the tabards.

[2] **King-at-arms**: an officer who has command of the heralds.

[3] **Armorial truncheon**: a short staff used as a badge of office and authority by the king-at-arms.

[4] **Cap of maintenance**: a scarlet cap trimmed with ermine, worn by the king-at-arms.

[5] **Device**: an emblem or motto; here, perhaps, the helmet placed above the royal coat-of-arms.

[6] **Crest**: here, the figure of a lion placed above the escutcheon or armorial shield.

Embroidered round and round.
The double tressure[1] might you see,
First by Achaius[2] borne,
The thistle and the fleur-de-lis,[3]
And gallant unicorn.[4]
So bright the king's armorial coat
That scarce the dazzled eye could note,
In living colors blazoned brave,[5]
The Lion,[6] which his title gave;
A train, which well beseemed[7] his state,
But all unarmed, around him wait.
Still is thy name in high account,
And still thy verse has charms,
Sir David Lindesay[8] of the Mount,
Lord Lion King-at-arms!

VIII.

Down from his horse did Marmion spring
Soon as he saw the Lion-King;
For well the stately baron knew

[1] **Double tressure**: a double border on an escutcheon.

[2] **Achaius**: a traditional king of Scotland (or of some part of it) in the ninth century.

[3] **Fleur-de-lis**: a lily or a figure of the head of a warlike weapon resembling a lily.

[4] **Unicorn**: a fabulous animal having the head and body of a horse, and a long straight horn projecting from the middle of the forehead.

[5] **Brave**: splendid.

[6] **Lion**: the lion rampant, or standing upright in an attitude of attack (in brightest red), on a gold ground on the arms of Scotland.

[7] **Beseemed**: suited.

[8] **Sir David Lindesay**: a popular poet of great influence in his day. It is supposed that he was born at the Mount, in the town of Cupar-Fife, about thirty miles north of Edinburgh.

To him such courtesy was due
Whom royal James[1] himself had crowned,
And on his temples placed the round
Of Scotland's ancient diadem,[2]
And wet his brow with hallowed wine,
And on his finger given to shine
The emblematic gem.[3]
Their mutual greetings duly made,
The Lion thus his message said: —
'Though Scotland's king hath deeply swore
Ne'er to knit faith with Henry more,
And strictly hath forbid resort
From England to his royal court,
Yet, for[4] he knows Lord Marmion's name
And honors much his warlike fame,
My liege hath deemed it shame and lack
Of courtesy to turn him back;
And by his order I, your guide,
Must lodging fit and fair provide
Till finds King James meet time to see
The flower of English chivalry.'

IX.

Though inly chafed at this delay,
Lord Marmion bears it as he may.
The Palmer, his mysterious guide,
Beholding thus his place supplied,
Sought to take leave in vain;

[1] **James**: James IV., King of Scotland.
[2] **Diadem**: a crown or royal head-dress.
[3] **Emblematic gem**: probably a seal or signet ring resembling that worn by the king of Scotland.
[4] **For**: because.

Strict was the Lion-King's command
That none who rode in Marmion's band
Should sever from the train.
'England has here enow of spies
In Lady Heron's witching eyes:'
To Marchmount thus apart he said,
But fair pretext to Marmion made.
The right-hand path they now decline,
And trace against the stream the Tyne.[1]

X.

At length up that wild dale they wind,
Where Crichtoun Castle[2] crowns the bank;
For there the Lion's care assigned
A lodging meet for Marmion's rank.
That castle rises on the steep
Of the green vale of Tyne;
And far beneath, where slow they creep
From pool to eddy, dark and deep,
Where alders moist and willows weep,
You hear her streams repine.
The towers in different ages rose,
Their various architecture shows
The builders' various hands;
A mighty mass, that could oppose,
When deadliest hatred fired its foes,
The vengeful Douglas[3] bands.

[1] **Tyne**: a small river of Scotland emptying into the North Sea, near Dunbar.

[2] **Crichtoun Castle**: (commonly spelled Crichton, see map,) a castle (now a magnificent ruin) on the banks of the Tyne about seven miles from Edinburgh. It belonged originally to Sir William Crichtoun.

[3] **Douglas**: the Earl of Douglas. Sir William Crichtoun was accessory

XI.

Crichtoun! though now thy miry court
But pens the lazy steer and sheep,
Thy turrets rude and tottered keep
Have been the minstrel's loved resort.
Oft have I traced, within thy fort,
Of mouldering shields the mystic sense,
Scutcheons of honor or pretence,[1]
Quartered in old armorial sort,
Remains of rude magnificence.
Nor wholly yet hath time defaced
Thy lordly gallery fair,
Nor yet the stony cord unbraced
Whose twisted knots, with roses laced,
Adorn thy ruined stair.
Still rises unimpaired below
The court-yard's graceful portico;
Above its cornice, row and row
Of fair hewn facets[2] richly show
Their pointed diamond form,
Though there but houseless cattle go,
To shield them from the storm.
And, shuddering, still may we explore,
Where oft whilom[3] were captives pent,
The darkness of thy Massy More,[4]

to the seizure and beheading, on a charge of treason, of the young Earl of Douglas; the succeeding earl attacked and partly demolished Crichtoun Castle.

[1] **Pretence**: the shield on which a man carries the arms of his wife, providing she is an heiress and he has children by her.

[2] **Facets**: here, diamond-shaped flat projections.

[3] **Whilom**: formerly.

[4] **Massy More**: a dungeon, a name of Saracenic or Eastern origin.

Or, from thy grass-grown battlement,
May trace in undulating line
The sluggish mazes of the Tyne.

XII.

Another aspect Crichtoun showed
As through its portal Marmion rode;
But yet 'twas melancholy state
Received him at the outer gate,
For none were in the castle then
But women, boys, or aged men.
With eyes scarce dried, the sorrowing dame
To welcome noble Marmion came;
Her son, a stripling twelve years old,
Proffered the baron's rein to hold;
For each man that could draw a sword
Had marched that morning with their lord,
Earl Adam Hepburn,[1] — he who died
On Flodden[2] by his sovereign's side.
Long may his lady look in vain!
She ne'er shall see his gallant train
Come sweeping back through Crichtoun-Dean.[3]
'Twas a brave race before the name
Of hated Bothwell[4] stained their fame.

[1] **Adam Hepburn**: second Earl of Bothwell.

[2] **Flodden**: this great battle between England and Scotland will be fully described in Canto VI.

[3] **Crichtoun-Dean**: probably a place in the vicinity of Crichtoun Castle; the name is not found in the Ordnance Gazetteer of Scotland.

[4] **Hated Bothwell**: James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell (1526–1577). In 1562 he formed a conspiracy to seize the queen, — the unfortunate Mary, Queen of Scots, — but was detected, and the plot failed. Later, he gained Mary's confidence and was implicated — so it is generally believed — in the

XIII.

And here two days did Marmion rest,
With every right that honor claims,
Attended as the king's own guest;—
Such the command of Royal James,
Who marshalled then his land's array,
Upon the Borough-moor[1] that lay.
Perchance he would not foeman's eye
Upon his gathering host should pry,
Till full prepared was every band
To march against the English land.
Here while they dwelt, did Lindesay's wit
Oft cheer the baron's moodier fit;
And, in his turn, he knew to prize
Lord Marmion's powerful mind and wise,—
Trained in the lore of Rome and Greece,
And policies of war and peace.

XIV.

It chanced, as fell the second night,
That on the battlements they walked,
And by the slowly fading light
Of varying topics talked;
And, unaware, the herald-bard[2]

murder of her husband, Lord Darnley. In 1567 Bothwell married the queen, but was compelled to fly to the Orkney Islands, and subsequently to Denmark, to escape the armed force which the nobility of Scotland raised against him.

[1] **Borough-moor**: the Borough or common moor was, says Scott, a spacious field extending from the walls of Edinburgh to the foot of the Braid Hills, about two miles distant.

[2] **Herald-bard**: alluding to the fact that Sir David Lindesay was a poet.

Said Marmion might his toil have spared
In travelling so far,
For that a messenger from heaven
In vain to James had counsel given
Against the English war;
And, closer questioned, thus he told
A tale which chronicles of old
In Scottish story have enrolled: —

XV.

SIR DAVID LINDESAY'S TALE.

'Of all the palaces so fair
Built for the royal dwelling
In Scotland, far beyond compare
Linlithgow[1] is excelling;
And in its park, in jovial June,
How sweet the merry linnet's tune,
How blithe the blackbird's lay!
The wild buck bells[2] from ferny brake,
The coot[3] dives merry on the lake,
The saddest heart might pleasure take
To see all nature gay.
But June is to our sovereign dear
The heaviest month in all the year;
Too well his cause of grief you know,

[1] **Linlithgow**: the ancient royal palace of Linlithgow in the town of that name seventeen miles west of Edinburgh. Here Mary, Queen of Scots, was born. Scott says the palace is "eminently beautiful."

[2] **Bells**: apparently, says Scott, an abbreviation of bellows.

[3] **Coot**: a kind of bird frequenting lakes and ponds.

June saw his father's overthrow.[1]
Woe to the traitors who could bring
The princely boy against his king!
Still in his conscience burns the sting.
In offices[2] as strict as Lent[3]
King James's June is ever spent.

XVI.

'When last this ruthful[4] month was come,
And in Linlithgow's holy dome
The king, as wont, was praying;
While for his royal father's soul
The chanters[5] sung, the bells did toll,
The bishop mass[6] was saying —
For now the year brought round again
The day the luckless king was slain —
In Catherine's aisle[7] the monarch knelt,
With sackcloth shirt[8] and iron belt,

[1] **His father's overthrow**: James III., father of James IV. of Scotland, was killed (1488) in a rebellion in which his son led a force against him. James IV., hearing the monks at Stirling deploring the death of his father, was seized with remorse, and endeavored to expiate his crime by severe penances.

[2] **Offices**: religious services.

[3] **Lent**: a fast of forty days, beginning at Ash-Wednesday and continuing until Easter. It was formerly kept with great strictness in commemoration of Christ's forty days' fast in the wilderness.

[4] **Ruthful**: woful, sorrowful.

[5] **Chanters**: here, persons hired to chant services for the dead.

[6] **Mass**: here, prayers for the repose of the soul of the dead.

[7] **Catherine's aisle**: St. Catherine's chapel, in St. Michael's church, Linlithgow. St. Michael's is considered one of the noblest Gothic churches in Scotland.

[8] **Sackcloth shirt**: a shirt made of very coarse, rough cloth, worn next to the skin as a penance.

And eyes with sorrow streaming;
Around him in their stalls[1] of state
The Thistle's Knight-Companions[2] sate,
Their banners o'er them beaming.
I too was there, and, sooth to tell,
Bedeafened with the jangling knell,
Was watching where the sunbeams fell,
Through the stained casement gleaming;
But while I marked what next befell
It seemed as I were dreaming.
Stepped from the crowd a ghostly wight,
In azure gown, with cincture[3] white;
His forehead bald, his head was bare,
Down hung at length his yellow hair. —
Now, mock me not when, good my lord,
I pledge to you my knightly word
That when I saw his placid grace,
His simple majesty of face,
His solemn bearing, and his pace
So stately gliding on, —
Seemed to me ne'er did limner[4] paint
So just an image of the saint
Who propped the Virgin in her faint,
The loved Apostle John!

[1] **Stalls**: seats in the choir of a church; they are wholly or partially enclosed at the back and sides, have canopies, and are often very richly carved.

[2] **Thistle's Knight-Companions**: the thistle appears to have been a national emblem in Scotland as early as the time of James III. There may have been a Scottish order of Knighthood of the Thistle in James IV.'s reign, though the order usually known as such was not founded until much later (1687).

[3] **Cincture**: a belt or girdle.

[4] **Limner**: an artist, a portrait painter.

XVII.

'He stepped before the monarch's chair,
And stood with rustic plainness there,
And little reverence made;
Nor head, nor body, bowed, nor bent,
But on the desk his arm he leant,
And words like these he said,
In a low voice, — but never tone
So thrilled through vein, and nerve, and bone: —
"My mother sent me from afar,
Sir King, to warn thee not to war, —
Woe waits on thine array;
If war thou wilt, of woman fair,[1]
Her witching wiles and wanton snare,
James Stuart, doubly warned, beware:
God keep thee as he may!" —
The wondering monarch seemed to seek
For answer, and found none;
And when he raised his head to speak,
The monitor[2] was gone.
The marshal and myself had cast[3]
To stop him as he outward passed;
But, lighter than the whirlwind's blast,
He vanished from our eyes,

[1] **Woman fair**: Tytler, *History of Scotland*, V., 67–70, relates this story of the warning and attributes it to a stratagem of the queen. However it had no influence, and Lady Heron (see Canto I., xvii.), the beautiful and artful wife of Sir William Heron (not Sir Hugh the Heron, as Scott later says), completely captivated the king. She used her influence to retard his military operations, and probably carried all the information she got from James to the Earl of Surrey, commander of the English forces.

[2] **Monitor**: one who warns of faults or calls to duty.

[3] **Cast**: intended, purposed.

Like sunbeam on the billow cast,
That glances but, and dies.'

XVIII.

While Lindesay told his marvel strange
The twilight was so pale,
He marked not Marmion's color change
While listening to the tale;
But, after a suspended pause,
The baron spoke: 'Of Nature's laws
So strong I held the force,
That never superhuman cause
Could e'er control their course,
And, three days since, had judged your aim
Was but to make your guest your game;[1]
But I have seen, since past the Tweed,
What much has changed my sceptic creed,
And made me credit aught.' — He stayed,
And seemed to wish his words unsaid,
But, by that strong emotion pressed,
Which prompts us to unload our breast
Even when discovery's pain,
To Lindesay did at length unfold
The tale his village host had told,
At Gifford, to his train.
Nought of the palmer says he there,
And nought of Constance or of Clare;
The thoughts which broke his sleep he seems
To mention but as feverish dreams.

[1] **Game**: sport, object of ridicule.

XIX.

'In vain,' said he, 'to rest I spread
My burning limbs, and couched my head;
Fantastic thoughts returned,
And, by their wild dominion led,
My heart within me burned.
So sore was the delirious goad,
I took my steed and forth I rode,
And, as the moon shone bright and cold,
Soon reached the camp upon the wold.[1]
The southern entrance I passed through,
And halted, and my bugle blew.
Methought an answer met my ear, —
Yet was the blast so low and drear
So hollow, and so faintly blown,
It might be echo of my own.

XX.

Thus judging, for a little space
I listened ere I left the place,
But scarce could trust my eyes,
Nor yet can think they serve me true,
When sudden in the ring I view,
In form distinct of shape and hue,
A mounted champion rise. —
I've fought, Lord-Lion, many a day,
In single fight and mixed affray,
And ever, I myself may say,
Have borne me as a knight;

[1] **Wold**: here a low range of hills.

But when this unexpected foe
Seemed starting from the gulf below, —
I care not though the truth I show, —
I trembled with affright;
And as I placed in rest my spear,
My hand so shook for very fear,
I scarce could couch it right.

XXI.

'Why need my tongue the issue tell?
We ran our course, — my charger fell; —
What could he 'gainst the shock of hell?
I rolled upon the plain.
High o'er my head with threatening hand
The spectre shook his naked brand, —
Yet did the worst remain:
My dazzled eyes I upward cast, —
Not opening hell itself could blast
Their sight like what I saw!
Full on his face the moonbeam strook! —
A face could never be mistook!
I knew the stern vindictive look,
And held my breath for awe.
I saw the face of one who, fled
To foreign climes, has long been dead, —
I well believe the last;
For ne'er from visor raised did stare
A human warrior with a glare
So grimly and so ghast.
Thrice o'er my head he shook the blade;
But when to good Saint George I prayed, —

The first time e'er I asked his aid,—
He plunged it in the sheath,
And, on his courser mounting light,
He seemed to vanish from my sight:
The moonbeam drooped, and deepest night
Sunk down upon the heath.—
'Twere long to tell what cause I have
To know his face that met me there,
Called by his hatred from the grave
To cumber upper air;
Dead or alive, good cause had he
To be my mortal enemy.'

XXII.

Marvelled Sir David of the Mount;
Then, learned in story, gan[1] recount
Such chance had happed[2] of old,
When once, near Norham, there did fight
A spectre fell of fiendish might,
In likeness of a Scottish knight,
With Brian Bulmer bold,
And trained[3] him nigh to disallow[4]
The aid of his baptismal vow.
'And such a phantom, too, 'tis said,
With Highland broadsword, targe, and plaid,
And fingers red with gore,
Is seen in Rothiemurcus[5] glade,
Or where the sable pine-trees shade

[1] **Gan**: began.
[2] **Happed**: happened.
[3] **Trained**: tempted.
[4] **Disallow**: reject.
[5] **Rothiemurcus**: the great fir forest of Rothiemurcus, on the river Spey, in the Scottish Highlands. The other places named are all in that vicinity.

Dark Tomantoul, and Auchnaslaid,
Dromouchty, or Glenmore.
And yet, whate'er such legends say
Of warlike demon, ghost, or fay,
On mountain, moor, or plain,
Spotless in faith, in bosom bold,
True son of chivalry should hold
These midnight terrors vain;
For seldom have such spirits power
To harm, save in the evil hour
When guilt we meditate within
Or harbor unrepented sin.' —
Lord Marmion turned him half aside,
And twice to clear his voice he tried,
Then pressed Sir David's hand, —
But nought, at length, in answer said;
And here their further converse stayed,
Each ordering that his band
Should bowne[1] them with the rising day,
To Scotland's camp to take their way, —
Such was the king's command.

XXIII.

Early they took Dun-Edin's[2] road,
And I could trace each step they trode;
Hill, brook, nor dell, nor rock, nor stone,
Lies on the path to me unknown.
Much might it boast of storied lore;
But, passing such digression o'er,

[1] **Bowne**: make ready.
[2] **Dun-Edin**: the ancient name of Edinburgh.

Suffice it that their route was laid
Across the furzy[1] hills of Braid.[2]
They passed the glen and scanty rill,
And climbed the opposing bank, until
They gained the top of Blackford Hill.[3]

XXIV.

Blackford! on whose uncultured breast,
Among the broom[4] and thorn and whin,[5]
A truant-boy, I sought the nest,
Or listed, as I lay at rest,
While rose on breezes thin
The murmur of the city crowd,
And, from his steeple jangling loud,
Saint Giles's[6] mingling din.
Now, from the summit to the plain,
Waves all the hill with yellow grain;
And o'er the landscape as I look,
Nought do I see unchanged remain,
Save the rude cliffs and chiming brook.
To me they make a heavy moan
Of early friendships past and gone.

[1] **Furzy**: covered with furze, or brambles.

[2] **Braid** (see note on "Borough-moor," p. 140).

[3] **Blackford Hill**: it is about two miles south of Edinburgh, and commands a fine view of the city and surrounding country.

[4] **Broom**: a low, shrubby, prickly plant, bearing beautiful yellow flowers.

[5] **Whin**: a species of furze, or bramble, same as gorse.

[6] **Saint Giles**: this is the oldest, and, in many respects, the most beautiful, church in the metropolis of Scotland. It is sometimes called "the St. Paul's of Edinburgh." It was from the pulpit of St. Giles that John Knox, the Reformer, thundered against the Church of Rome; and it was here that Jenny Geddes threw her stool at the minister's head when he tried to introduce the Episcopal service-book.

XXV.

But different far the change has been,
Since Marmion from the crown
Of Blackford saw that martial scene
Upon the bent so brown:
Thousand pavilions,[1] white as snow,
Spread all the Borough-moor below,
Upland, and dale, and down.
A thousand did I say? I ween,
Thousands on thousands there were seen,
That checkered all the heath between
The streamlet and the town,
In crossing ranks extending far,
Forming a camp irregular;
Oft giving way where still there stood
Some relics of the old oak wood,
That darkly huge did intervene
And tamed the glaring white with green:
In these extended lines there lay
A martial kingdom's vast array.

XXVI.

For from Hebudes,[2] dark with rain,
To eastern Lodon's[3] fertile plain,
And from the southern Redswire[4] edge[5]

[1] **Pavilions**: tents.

[2] **Hebudes**: the Latin name of the Hebrides.

[3] **Lodon**: Lothian, a district south of the Firth of Forth. It formerly comprised Haddington, Edinburgh, and Linlithgow, called respectively East, Mid, and West Lothian.

[4] **Redswire**: on Carter's Fell, one of the Cheviot Hills.

[5] **Edge**: the side of a hill or ridge.

To furthest Rosse's[1] rocky ledge,
From west to east, from south to north,
Scotland sent all her warriors forth.
Marmion might hear the mingled hum
Of myriads up the mountain come, —
The horses' tramp and tinkling clank,
Where chiefs reviewed their vassal rank,
And charger's shrilling neigh, —
And see the shifting lines advance,
While frequent flashed from shield and lance
The sun's reflected ray.

XXVII.

Thin curling in the morning air,
The wreaths of failing smoke declare
To embers now the brands decayed
Where the night-watch their fires had made.
They saw, slow rolling on the plain,
Full many a baggage-cart and wain,[2]
And dire artillery's clumsy car,
By sluggish oxen tugged to war;
And there were Borthwick's Sisters Seven,[3]
And culverins[4] which France had given.
Ill-omened gift! the gun's remain
The conqueror's spoil on Flodden plain.

[1] **Rosse**: Ross-shire, in Northern Scotland; the rocky western coast is especially wild and grand.

[2] **Wain**: a wagon.

[3] **Borthwick's Sisters Seven**: seven cannon, cast, says Scott, by a person named Borthwick.

[4] **Culverins**: long, slender cannon.

XXVIII.

Nor marked they less where in the air
A thousand streamers flaunted fair;
Various in shape, device, and hue,
Green, sanguine,[1] purple, red, and blue,
Broad, narrow, swallow-tailed, and square,
Scroll,[2] pennon, pencil, bandrol, there
O'er the pavilions flew.
Highest and midmost, was descried
The royal banner floating wide;
The staff, a pine-tree, strong and straight,
Pitched deeply in a massive stone,
Which still in memory is shown,
Yet bent beneath the standard's weight,
Whene'er the western wind unrolled
With toil the huge and cumbrous fold,
And gave to view the dazzling field,
Where in proud Scotland's royal shield
The ruddy lion ramped[3] in gold.

XXIX.

Lord Marmion viewed the landscape bright, —
He viewed it with a chief's delight, —
Until within him burned his heart,
And lightning from his eye did part,

[1] **Sanguine**: blood color.

[2] **Scroll**, etc.: different kinds of flags, to designate different degrees of rank.

[3] **Ramped**: in heraldy, a lion is rampant when he stands upright (properly, on one foot), in an attitude of attack. The ancient Scottish banner had a rampant lion in bright red on a gold ground.

As on the battle-day;
Such glance did falcon never dart
When stooping on his prey.
'Oh! well, Lord-Lion, hast thou said,
Thy king from warfare to dissuade
Were but a vain essay;
For, by Saint George, were that host mine,
Not power infernal nor divine
Should once to peace my soul incline,
Till I had dimmed their armor's shine
In glorious battle-fray!'
Answered the bard, of milder mood:
'Fair is the sight, — and yet 'twere good
That kings would think withal,
When peace and wealth their land has blessed,
'Tis better to sit still at rest
Than rise, perchance to fall.'

XXX.

Still on the spot Lord Marmion stayed,
For fairer scene he ne'er surveyed.
When sated with the martial show
That peopled all the plain below,
The wandering eye could o'er it go,
And mark the distant city glow
With gloomy splendor red;
For on the smoke-wreaths, huge and slow
That round her sable turrets flow,
The morning-beams were shed,
And tinged them with a lustre proud,
Like that which streaks a thunder-cloud.

Such dusky grandeur clothed the height
Where the huge castle[1] holds its state,
And all the steep slope down,
Whose ridgy back heaves to the sky,
Piled deep and massy, close and high,
Mine own romantic town!
But northward far, with purer blaze,
On Ochil mountains[2] fell the rays,
And as each heathy top they kissed,
It gleamed a purple amethyst.
Yonder the shores of Fife[3] you saw,
Here Preston-Bay[4] and Berwick-Law;[5]
And, broad between them rolled,
The gallant Firth[6] the eye might note,
Whose islands on its bosom float,
Like emeralds chased[7] in gold.
Fitz-Eustace' heart felt closely pent;
As if to give his rapture vent,
The spur he to his charger lent,
And raised his bridle hand,

[1] **Castle**: Edinburgh Castle. It stands on the summit of the central hill of Edinburgh, and covers an area of about six acres. Tradition represents the castle-rock, or hill, as having been fortified more than a thousand years ago; though a part of the present pile was built by Mary, Queen of Scots, as a royal palace, in 1565.

[2] **Ochil**: a range of lofty hills in Perthshire, about twenty miles northwest of Edinburgh.

[3] **Fife**: a county north of Edinburgh, on the shores of the Firth of Forth.

[4] **Preston-Bay**: Preston is in Haddingtonshire, east of Edinburgh. The Bay may be on the Firth of Forth: it is not found in the *Ordnance Gazetteer of Scotland*.

[5] **Berwick-Law**: Berwick Hill, a height just south of North Berwick.

[6] **Firth**: the Firth of Forth.

[7] **Chased**: set.

And making demi-volt[1] in air,
Cried, 'Where's the coward that would not dare
To fight for such a land!'
The Lindesay smiled his joy to see,
Nor Marmion's frown repressed his glee.

XXXI.

Thus while they looked, a flourish proud,
Where mingled trump, and clarion loud,
And fife, and kettle-drum,
And sackbut[2] deep, and psaltery,[3]
And war-pipe with discordant cry,
And cymbal clattering to the sky,
Making wild music bold and high,
Did up the mountain come;
The whilst the bells with distant chime
Merrily tolled the hour of prime,[4]
And thus the Lindesay spoke:
'Thus clamor still the war-notes when
The king to mass his way has ta'en,
Or to Saint Catherine's of Sienne,[5]
Or Chapel of Saint Rocque.[6]
To you they speak of martial fame,

[1] **Demi-volt**: a movement to which a horse is trained, in which he makes a half-turn with the forelegs raised.

[2] **Sackbut**: a kind of trumpet.

[3] **Psaltery**: a musical instrument, resembling a harp.

[4] **Prime**: early morning prayers.

[5] **Saint Catherine's of Sienne**: outside the walls of Edinburgh there formerly stood a convent dedicated to St. Catherine of Sienna.

[6] **Saint Rocque**: this chapel stood on the west end of Borough-moor, where the king had his camp.

But me remind of peaceful game,
When blither was their cheer,
Thrilling in Falkland-woods[1] the air,
In signal none his steed should spare,
But strive which foremost might repair
To the downfall of the deer.

XXXII.

'Nor less,' he said, 'when looking forth
I view yon Empress of the North[2]
Sit on her hilly throne,
Her palace's imperial bowers,
Her castle, proof to hostile powers,
Her stately halls and holy towers —
Nor less,' he said, 'I moan
To think what woe mischance may bring,
And how these merry bells may ring
The death-dirge of our gallant king,
Or with their larum[3] call
The burghers[4] forth to watch and ward,[5]
'Gainst Southern[6] sack and fires to guard
Dun-Edin's leaguered[7] wall. —
But not for my presaging[8] thought,
Dream conquest sure or cheaply bought!
Lord Marmion, I say nay:

[1] **Falkland-woods**: this was a royal hunting forest in Fifeshire, about twenty-five miles north of Edinburgh.
[2] **Empress of the North**: Edinburgh.
[3] **Larum**: alarm.
[4] **Burghers**: citizens.
[5] **Watch and ward**: to keep watch day and night.
[6] **Southern**: English.
[7] **Leaguered**: besieged.
[8] **Presaging**: foreboding, foretelling.

God is the guider of the field,
He breaks the champion's spear and shield,—
But thou thyself shalt say,
When joins yon host in deadly stowre,[1]
That England's dames must weep in bower,
Her monks the death-mass[2] sing;
For never saw'st thou such a power
Led on by such a king.'
And now, down winding to the plain,
The barriers of the camp they gain,
And there they make a stay.—
There stays the Minstrel, till he fling
His hand o'er every Border string,
And fit his harp the pomp to sing
Of Scotland's ancient court and king,
In the succeeding lay.

[1] **Stowre**: battle.
[2] **Death-mass**: death service.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO FIFTH.

To GEORGE ELLIS,[1] Esq.

Edinburgh.

WHEN dark December glooms the day,
And takes our autumn joys away;
When short and scant the sunbeam throws
Upon the weary waste of snows
A cold and profitless regard,
Like patron on a needy bard;
When sylvan occupation's done,
And o'er the chimney rests the gun,
And hang in idle trophy near,
The game-pouch, fishing-rod, and spear;
When wiry terrier, rough and grim,
And greyhound, with his length of limb,
And pointer, now employed no more,
Cumber our parlor's narrow floor;
When in his stall the impatient steed
Is long condemned to rest and feed;
When from our snow-encircled home
Scarce cares the hardiest step to roam,

[1] **George Ellis, Esq.**: an English scholar and writer (1753–1815), and an intimate friend of Scott's. On his visits to London, Scott was accustomed to stay with Ellis. He says of him: "Mr. Ellis was the finest converser I ever knew; his patience and good breeding made me often ashamed of myself going off at score (*i.e.* starting off suddenly) upon some favorite topic."

Since path is none, save that to bring
The needful water from the spring;
When wrinkled news-page, thrice conned o'er,
Beguiles the dreary hour no more,
And darkling[1] politician, crossed,[2]
Inveighs against the lingering post,
And answering housewife sore complains
Of carriers'[3] snow-impeded wains;—
When such the country-cheer, I come
Well pleased to seek our city home;
For converse and for books to change
The Forest's melancholy range,
And welcome with renewed delight
The busy day and social night.

Not here need my desponding rhyme
Lament the ravages of time,
As erst by Newark's riven towers,
And Ettrick stripped of forest bowers.
True, Caledonia's Queen[4] is changed
Since on her dusky summit ranged,
Within its steepy limits pent
By bulwark, line, and battlement,
And flanking towers and laky flood,
Guarded and garrisoned she stood,
Denying entrance or resort

[1] **Darkling**: in the dark as to political events, because no news from London is received.

[2] **Crossed**: thwarted, disappointed.

[3] **Carriers'**: the word corresponds to our expressmen.

[4] **Caledonia's Queen**: *i.e.* Scotland's Queen, Edinburgh. The Old Town of Edinburgh, says Scott, was secured on the north side by a lake, now drained, and on the south by a wall.

Save at each tall embattled port,[1]
Above whose arch, suspended, hung
Portcullis spiked with iron prong.
That long is gone, — but not so long
Since, early closed and opening late,
Jealous revolved the studded gate,[2]
Whose task, from eve to morning tide,
A wicket[3] churlishly supplied.
Stern then and steel-girt was thy brow,
Dun-Edin! Oh, how altered now,
When safe amid thy mountain court
Thou sitt'st, like empress at her sport,
And liberal, unconfined, and free,
Flinging thy white arms to the sea,
For thy dark cloud, with umbered[4] lower,[5]
That hung o'er cliff and lake and tower,
Thou gleam'st against the western ray
Ten thousand lines of brighter day!

Not she[6] the championess of old,
In Spenser's magic tale enrolled,
She for the charmed spear renowned,

[1] **Embattled port**: gate with battlements.

[2] **Studded gate**: a ponderous gate, studded with large nails, in the wall of the city. At night this gate was locked and guarded; admission then could only be obtained through a small door, or "wicket," in the gate, and even that was opened "churlishly" (*i.e.* with reluctant ill-will), after much questioning on the part of the gate-keeper.

[3] **Wicket** (see note above on "Studded Gate").

[4] **Umbered**: dark, shadowed.

[5] **Lower**: gloomy or frowning aspect.

[6] **She**: Britomart, a "lady knight" in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Book III., Canto IX. She represents Charity, and is armed with a magic spear which nothing can resist.

Which forced each knight to kiss the ground, —
Not she more changed, when, placed at rest,
What time she was Malbecco's[1] guest,
She gave to flow her maiden vest;
When, from the corselet's[2] grasp relieved,
Free to the sight her bosom heaved:
Sweet was her blue eye's modest smile,
Erst hidden by the aventayle,[3]
And down her shoulders graceful rolled
Her locks profuse of paly gold.
They who whilom in midnight fight
Had marvelled at her matchless might,
No less her maiden charms approved,
But looking liked, and liking loved.
The sight could jealous pangs beguile,
And charm Malbecco's cares awhile;
And he, the wandering Squire of Dames,[4]
Forgot his Columbella's[5] claims,
And passion, erst unknown, could gain
The breast of blunt Sir Satyrane;[6]
Nor durst light Paridell[7] advance,
Bold as he was, a looser glance.
She charmed, at once, and tamed the heart,
Incomparable Britomart!

[1] **Malbecco**: a jealous character in the *Faerie Queene*.

[2] **Corselet**: sleeveless armor, protecting the trunk of the body.

[3] **Aventayle**: the movable front of a helmet.

[4] **Squire of Dames**: a beau, a gallant.

[5] **Columbella**: the Squire of Dames had plighted his love to "faire Columbell" (*Faerie Queene*, III., VII., 51).

[6] **Sir Satyrane**: a knight in the *Faerie Queene*. (Book III., VII., 30.)

"The good Sir Satyrane
That raungd abrode to seeke adventures wilde."

[7] **Paridell**: a fickle and licentious character in the *Faerie Queene*.

So thou, fair City! disarrayed
Of battled wall and rampart's aid,
As stately seem'st, but lovelier far
Than in that panoply[1] of war.
Nor deem that from thy fenceless[2] throne
Strength and security are flown;
Still as of yore, Queen of the North!
Still canst thou send thy children forth.
Ne'er readier at alarm-bell's call
Thy burghers rose to man thy wall
Than now, in danger, shall be thine,
Thy dauntless voluntary line;
For fosse[3] and turret proud to stand,
Their breasts the bulwarks of the land.
Thy thousands, trained to martial toil,
Full red would stain their native soil,
Ere from thy mural[4] crown[5] there fell
The slightest knosp[6] or pinnacle.
And if it come, as come it may,
Dun-Edin! that eventful day,
Renowned for hospitable deed,
That virtue much with Heaven may plead,
In patriarchal times[7] whose care
Descending angels deigned to share;
That claim may wrestle blessings down

[1] **Panoply**: complete armor. [2] **Fenceless**: defenceless.
[3] **Fosse**: a moat, or ditch, of defence.
[4] **Mural**: pertaining to a wall.
[5] **Mural crown**: referring, apparently, to Edinburgh Castle, still the city's crown, and formerly the crown or highest point of the city wall as well.
[6] **Knosp**: an architectural ornament, resembling a bud.
[7] **Patriarchal times**: referring to Genesis xviii.–xix.

On those who fight for the Good Town,
Destined in every age to be
Refuge of injured royalty;
Since first, when conquering York[1] arose,
To Henry[2] meek she gave repose,
Till late, with wonder, grief, and awe,
Great Bourbon's[3] relics sad she saw.

Truce to[4] these thoughts!—for, as they rise,
How gladly I avert mine eyes,
Bodings, or true or false, to change
For Fiction's fair romantic range,
Or for Tradition's dubious light,
That hovers 'twixt the day and night:
Dazzling alternately and dim,
Her wavering lamp I'd rather trim,
Knights, squires, and lovely dames to see,
Creation of my fantasy,
Than gaze abroad on reeky[5] fen,
And make of mists invading men.—
Who loves not more the night of June
Than dull December's gloomy noon?
The moonlight than the fog of frost?
And can we say which cheats the most?

[1] **York**: Edward IV. of England, son of the Duke of York. In the Civil Wars of the Roses, between the House of York and the House of Lancaster, Henry VI., who represented the latter, fled, with his queen and son, to Scotland after his defeat at Towton. [2] **Henry**: Henry VI.

[3] **Bourbon**: in 1796, says Scott, the exiled Count d' Artois, afterwards Charles X. of France, took up his residence in Holyrood Palace, Edinburgh. When, in 1830, he was driven from his throne by the revolution of July, he again sought refuge in the ancient palace of the Stuarts.

[4] **Truce to**: cessation to. [5] **Reeky**: here, foggy or misty.

But who shall teach my harp to gain
A sound of the romantic strain
Whose Anglo-Norman [1] tones whilere [2]
Could win the royal Henry's ear,
Famed Beauclerc [3] called, for that he loved
The minstrel and his lay approved?
Who shall these lingering notes redeem,
Decaying on Oblivion's stream;
Such notes as from the Breton [4] tongue
Marie [5] translated, Blondel [6] sung?—
Oh! born Time's ravage to repair,
And make the dying Muse thy care
Who, when his scythe her hoary foe
Was poising for the final blow,
The weapon from his hand could wring,
And break his glass [7] and shear his wing,
And bid, reviving in his strain,
The gentle poet live again;
Thou, who canst give to lightest lay
An unpedantic moral gay,
Nor less the dullest theme bid flit

[1] **Anglo-Norman**: partly English, partly Norman.

[2] **Whilere**: a short time ago.

[3] **Beauclerc**: Fine Scholar, a name given to Henry I. of England, because in an unscholarly age, when kings had but little education, he possessed literary tastes and showed an interest in books and learning.

[4] **Breton**: relating to Brittany, France.

[5] **Marie**: a French woman in the reign of Henry III. (1216–1272), who translated twelve lays or poetical stories for the king.

[6] **Blondel**: a celebrated French minstrel, who became strongly attached to Richard I. of England. When the king was a prisoner in Germany, Blondel is said to have discovered his master by travelling through Germany singing one of the king's favorite songs under the windows of each castle, until at length he was heard and answered by Richard.

[7] **Glass**: hour-glass.

On wings of unexpected wit;
In letters as in life approved,
Example honored and beloved, —
Dear ELLIS! to the bard impart
A lesson of thy magic art,
To win at once the head and heart, —
At once to charm, instruct, and mend,
My guide, my pattern, and my friend!

Such minstrel lesson to bestow
Be long thy pleasing task, — but, oh!
No more by thy example teach
What few can practise, all can preach, —
With even patience to endure
Lingering disease and painful cure,
And boast affliction's pangs subdued
By mild and manly fortitude.
Enough, the lesson has been given:
Forbid the repetition, Heaven!

Come listen, then! for thou hast known
And loved the Minstrel's varying tone,
Who, like his Border sires of old,
Waked a wild measure rude and bold,
Till Windsor's oaks [1] and Ascot plain
With wonder heard the Northern strain.
Come listen! bold in thy applause,
The bard shall scorn pedantic laws;
And, as the ancient art could stain

[1] **Windsor's oaks**: Mr. Ellis lived at Sunning-hill near Windsor. Ascot Heath is about six miles from Windsor.

Achievements[1] on the storied[2] pane,
Irregularly traced and planned,
But yet so glowing and so grand,
So shall he strive, in changeful hue,
Field, feast, and combat to renew,
And loves, and arms, and harpers' glee,
And all the pomp of chivalry.

[1] **Achievements**: either representations of heroic deeds or coats-of-arms.
[2] **Storied**: painted with scenes or stories from history.

Canto Fifth.

THE COURT.

I.

THE train has left the hills of Braid;
The barrier guard have open made —
So Lindesay bade — the palisade
That closed the tented ground;
Their men the warders backward drew,
And carried pikes as they rode through
Into its ample bound.
Fast ran the Scottish warriors there,
Upon the Southern band to stare,
And envy with their wonder rose,
To see such well-appointed foes;
Such length of shafts,[1] such mighty bows,
So huge that many simply thought
But for a vaunt[2] such weapons wrought,
And little deemed their force to feel
Through links of mail and plates of steel
When, rattling upon Flodden vale,
The cloth-yard arrows flew like hail.

II.

Nor less did Marmion's skilful view
Glance every line and squadron[3] through,

[1] **Shafts**: arrows.
[2] **Vaunt**: idle display.
[3] **Squadron**: a body of troops.

And much he marvelled one small land
Could marshal forth such various band;
For men-at-arms were here,
Heavily sheathed in mail and plate,
Like iron towers for strength and weight,
On Flemish steeds of bone and height,
With battle-axe and spear.
Young knights and squires, a lighter train,
Practised their chargers on the plain,
By aid of leg, of hand, and rein,
Each warlike feat to show,
To pass, to wheel, the croupe [1] to gain,
And high curvet,[2] that not in vain
The sword-sway [3] might descend amain
On foeman's casque below.
He saw the hardy burghers there
March armed on foot with faces bare,
For visor they wore none,
Nor waving plume, nor crest of knight;
But burnished were their corselets bright,
Their brigantines [4] and gorgets [5] light
Like very silver shone.
Long pikes they had for standing fight,
Two-handed swords [6] they wore,
And many wielded mace [7] of weight,
And bucklers bright they bore.

[1] **Croupe**: rump of a horse. [2] **High curvet**: a kind of high leap.
[3] **Sword-sway**: sword-stroke or blow.
[4] **Brigantines**: the body-armor of a foot-soldier — jackets quilted with iron rings or plates.
[5] **Gorgets**: armor for the throat and upper part of the chest.
[6] **Two-handed swords**: very heavy swords which required both hands to use. [7] **Mace**: a club with a metal head.

III.

On foot the yeoman too, but dressed
In his steel-jack,[1] a swarthy vest,
With iron quilted well;
Each at his back — a slender store —
His forty days' provision bore,
As feudal[2] statutes tell.
His arms were halbert, axe, or spear,
A crossbow there, a hagbut[3] here,
A dagger-knife, and brand.
Sober he seemed and sad of cheer,[4]
As loath to leave his cottage dear
And march to foreign strand,
Or musing who would guide his steer
To till the fallow[5] land.
Yet deem not in his thoughtful eye
Did aught of dastard terror lie;
More dreadful far his ire
Than theirs who, scorning danger's name,
In eager mood to battle came,
Their valor like light straw on flame,
A fierce but fading fire.

[1] **Steel-jack**: steel-jacket or coat-of-mail.

[2] **Feudal**: the system of military government based on the holding of land from the king on condition of military service. It formerly prevailed throughout western Europe. Feudalism formed a huge pyramid, whose apex was the king, whose base was the serf — the farm-laborer bound to the soil he tilled. Mutual protection bound all together. The lord swore to protect his vassal, the vassal swore to fight for his lord. It was a rude system of organization, but far better than barbarism.

[3] **Hagbut**: a long, heavy gun resembling a musket. It was fired from a forked rest.

[4] **Cheer**: countenance.

[5] **Fallow**: usually, land ploughed but left unseeded; here, uncultivated.

IV.

Not so the Borderer[1] — bred to war,
He knew the battle's din afar,
And joyed to hear it swell.
His peaceful day was slothful ease;
Nor harp nor pipe his ear could please
Like the loud slogan[2] yell.
On active steed, with lance and blade,
The light-armed pricker[3] plied his trade, —
Let nobles fight for fame;
Let vassals follow where they lead,
Burghers, to guard their townships, bleed,
But war's the Borderers' game.
Their gain, their glory, their delight,
To sleep the day, maraud the night,
O'er mountain, moss,[4] and moor;
Joyful to fight they took their way,
Scarce caring who might win the day,
Their booty was secure.
These, as Lord Marmion's train passed by,
Looked on at first with careless eye,
Nor marvelled aught, well taught to know
The form and force of English bow.
But when they saw the lord arrayed
In splendid arms and rich brocade,[5]
Each Borderer to his kinsman said, —

[1] **Borderer**: as the men who lived on the Scottish border were continually at strife with the English, they may be said to have been "bred to war."
[2] **Slogan**: the war-cry.
[3] **Pricker**: a light horseman.
[4] **Moss**: a peat or turf bog.
[5] **Brocade**: silk stuff variegated with gold and silver, or ornamented with raised flowers and other work.

'Hist, Ringan! seest thou there!
Canst guess which road they'll homeward ride?
Oh! could we but on Border side,
By Eusedale glen, or Liddell's tide,[1]
Beset[2] a prize so fair!
That fangless Lion,[3] too, their guide,
Might chance to lose his glistering hide;
Brown Maudlin[4] of that doublet pied,[5]
Could make a kirtle[6] rare.'

V.

Next, Marmion marked the Celtic race,[7]
Of different language, form, and face,
A various race of man;
Just then the chiefs their tribes arrayed,
And wild and garish[8] semblance[9] made
The checkered trews[10] and belted plaid,
And varying notes the war-pipes[11] brayed

[1] **Eusedale glen, or Liddell's tide**: the Euse and the Liddell are small streams flowing into the Esk, a river of Scotland which empties into Solway Frith — an inlet of the Irish Sea.

For a short distance the Liddell forms part of the boundary between Scotland and England.

[2] **Beset**: hem in, get possession of.

[3] **Fangless Lion**: Sir David Lindesay. See Canto IV., line 153.

[4] **Maudlin**: a corruption of Magdalen.

[5] **Pied**: variegated, spotted with different colors.

[6] **Kirtle**: a gown.

[7] **Celtic race**: the Highlanders of Scotland form part of one of the two chief branches of the Celts. The Irish and the Welsh also belong to the same race.

[8] **Garish**: gaudy, showy.

[9] **Semblance**: appearance.

[10] **Trews**: short tartan or checkered trousers; they leave the knee bare.

[11] **War-pipes**: bagpipes.

To every varying clan.[1]
Wild through their red or sable hair
Looked out their eyes with savage stare
On Marmion as he passed;
Their legs above the knee were bare;
Their frame was sinewy, short, and spare,
And hardened to the blast;
Of taller race, the chiefs they own
Were by the eagle's plumage known.
The hunted red-deer's undressed hide
Their hairy buskins[2] well supplied;
The graceful bonnet[3] decked their head;
Back from their shoulders hung the plaid;
A broadsword of unwieldy length,
A dagger proved for edge and strength,
A studded targe they wore,
And quivers, bows, and shafts, — but, oh!
Short was the shaft and weak the bow
To that which England bore.
The Isles-men[4] carried at their backs
The ancient Danish battle-axe.
They raised a wild and wondering cry,
As with his guide rode Marmion by.
Loud were their clamoring tongues, as when
The clanging sea-fowl leave the fen,
And, with their cries discordant mixed,
Grumbled and yelled the pipes[5] betwixt.

[1] **Clan**: a tribe or body of kinsmen under the lead of a chieftain — the chieftain is regarded as representing a common ancestor.

[2] **Buskins**: half-boots or very high shoes or sandals.

[3] **Bonnet**: here, a kind of knitted woollen cap.

[4] **Isles-men**: the men from the islands bordering on the coast of Northern and Northwestern Scotland.

[5] **Pipes**: bagpipes.

VI.

Thus through the Scottish camp they passed,
And reached the city gate at last,
Where all around, a wakeful guard,
Armed burghers kept their watch and ward.
Well had they cause of jealous fear,
When lay encamped in field so near
The Borderer and the Mountaineer.
As through the bustling streets they go,
All was alive with martial show;
At every turn with dinning clang
The armorer's anvil clashed and rang,
Or toiled the swarthy smith to wheel[1]
The bar that arms the charger's heel,
Or axe or falchion[2] to the side
Of jarring grindstone was applied.
Page, groom, and squire, with hurrying pace,
Through street and lane and market-place,
Bore lance or casque or sword;
While burghers, with important face,
Described each new-come lord,
Discussed his lineage, told his name,
His following,[3] and his warlike fame.
The Lion led to lodging meet,[4]
Which high o'erlooked the crowded street;
There must the baron rest

[1] **Wheel**: if charger is used here of the war-horse (its usual definition), then this word means to bend the iron for the horse-shoe; but if charger is used (as it may be) of the rider, then it signifies to furnish the bar of the spur with a little wheel armed with sharp points.

[2] **Falchion**: a broad, short sword with a point curving slightly upward.

[3] **Following**: feudal retainers, tenants bound to follow their lord to battle.

[4] **Meet**: fit, appropriate.

Till past the hour of vesper tide,[1]
And then to Holy-Rood must ride, —
Such was the king's behest.
Meanwhile the Lion's care assigns
A banquet rich and costly wines
To Marmion and his train;
And when the appointed hour succeeds,
The baron dons[2] his peaceful weeds,[3]
And following Lindesay as he leads,
The palace halls they gain.

VII.

Old Holy-Rood rung merrily
That night with wassail, mirth, and glee:
King James within her princely bower[4]
Feasted the chiefs of Scotland's power,
Summoned to spend the parting hour;
For he had charged that his array
Should southward march by break of day.
Well loved that splendid monarch aye[5]
The banquet and the song,
By day the tourney,[6] and by night
The merry dance, traced fast and light,
The maskers[7] quaint,[8] the pageant[9] bright,

[1] **Vesper tide**: vesper time, the hour of evening religious services.
[2] **Dons**: (contraction of *do on*) puts on.
[3] **Weeds**: garments, Scott here contrasts the word with weeds in the (unusual) sense of armor. See note 7, p. 13.
[4] **Bower**: here, used for palace. [5] **Aye**: ever.
[6] **Tourney**: tournament or mock battle between mounted knights.
[7] **Maskers**: those taking a part in a masked ball or in a pageant.
[8] **Quaint**: fanciful, odd.
[9] **Pageant**: here, any spectacle or theatrical show.

The revel loud and long.
This feast outshone his banquets past;
It was his blithest[1] — and his last.
The dazzling lamps from gallery gay
Cast on the court a dancing ray;
Here to the harp did minstrels sing,
There ladies touched a softer string;
With long-eared cap[2] and motley vest,
The licensed fool[3] retailed his jest;
His magic tricks the juggler plied;
At dice and draughts[4] the gallants[5] vied;
While some, in close recess apart,
Courted the ladies of their heart,
Nor courted them in vain;
For often in the parting hour
Victorious Love asserts his power
O'er coldness and disdain;
And flinty is her heart can view
To battle march a lover true —
Can hear, perchance, his last adieu,
Nor own her share of pain.

VIII.

Through this mixed crowd of glee and game
The king to greet Lord Marmion came,

[1] **Blithest**: merriest.
[2] **Long-eared cap**: a cap having an imitation of asses' ears on it.
[3] **Licensed fool**: a professional fool or jester. It was formerly customary for kings and noblemen to keep these "fools," and they were allowed the largest license of speech.
[4] **Draughts**: the game of checkers.
[5] **Gallants**: men of rank and fashion.

While, reverent, all made room.
An easy task it was, I trow,
King James's manly form to know,
Although, his courtesy to show,
He doffed[1] to Marmion bending low
His broidered cap and plume.
For royal were his garb and mien:
His cloak of crimson velvet piled,[2]
Trimmed with the fur of marten wild,
His vest of changeful satin sheen,[3]
The dazzled eye beguiled;
His gorgeous collar hung adown,
Wrought with the badge of Scotland's crown,
The thistle brave of old renown;
His trusty blade, Toledo[4] right,[5]
Descended from a baldric[6] bright;
White were his buskins, on the heel
His spurs inlaid of gold and steel;
His bonnet, all of crimson fair,
Was buttoned with a ruby rare:
And Marmion deem'd he ne'er had seen
A prince of such a noble mien.

IX.

The monarch's form was middle size,
For feat of strength or exercise

[1] **Doffed**: (contraction of *do off*) removed.
[2] **Piled**: having a pile or nap.
[3] **Sheen**: shining, splendid.
[4] **Toledo**: the best swords were then made at Toledo, Spain.
[5] **Right**: genuine.
[6] **Baldric**: a broad shoulder-belt coming down to the waist or below it.

Shaped in proportion fair;
And hazel was his eagle eye,
And auburn of the darkest dye
His short curled beard and hair.
Light was his footstep in the dance,
And firm his stirrup in the lists;
And, oh! he had that merry glance
That seldom lady's heart resists.
Lightly from fair to fair he flew,
And loved to plead, lament, and sue, —
Suit lightly won and short-lived pain,
For monarchs seldom sigh in vain.
I said he joyed in banquet bower;
But, mid his mirth, 'twas often strange
How suddenly his cheer would change,
His look o'ercast and lower,
If in a sudden turn he felt
The pressure of his iron belt,[1]
That bound his breast in penance pain,
In memory of his father slain.
Even so 'twas strange how evermore,
Soon as the passing pang was o'er,
Forward he rushed with double glee
Into the stream of revelry.
Thus dim-seen object of affright
Startles the courser in his flight,
And half he halts, half springs aside,

[1] **Iron belt**: in 1488 a confederacy of nobles rose in rebellion against James III. They placed his son, Prince James, at their head, and having conquered the king in battle, he was soon afterward murdered.

As penance for his part in this act, which brought him to the throne, James IV. was accustomed to wear an iron belt to which, says Scott, he "added certain ounces every year that he lived."

But feels the quickening spur applied,
And, straining on the tightened rein,
Scours doubly swift o'er hill and plain.

X.

O'er James's heart, the courtiers say,
Sir Hugh the Heron's wife held sway;
To Scotland's court she came
To be a hostage[1] for her lord,
Who Cessford's gallant heart had gored,
And with the king to make accord
Had sent his lovely dame.
Nor to that lady free alone
Did the gay king allegiance own;
For the fair Queen of France[2]

[1] **Hostage**: here, captive. According to Scott, Sir Hugh the Heron had been in some sort accessory to the killing of Sir Robert Ker of Cessford. For this act Henry, king of England, delivered him up to James, who imprisoned him in the fortress of Fastcastle. In 1513 James invaded England, stormed Ford Castle, and took Lady Heron captive. She in turn captivated the king by her beauty, and he became her willing slave. She is here represented as making "accord," *i.e.* negotiating with the king for her husband's release.

Scott speaks of Lady Heron or Lady Ford, as she is also called, as the wife of *Sir Hugh the Heron*, mentioned on p. 31; but Tytler's History of Scotland, V. 69, calls her the wife of Sir William Heron. As Lady Heron was not taken prisoner until the campaign beginning August 22, 1513, and which ended September 9 in the battle of Flodden and death of James, it is evident that the poet does not in this instance adhere to the strict chronology of history, since he makes the lady present with the king at Holyrood Palace, to which James does not appear to have returned after the actual commencement of hostilities with England.

[2] **Queen of France**: Anne of Britanny, queen of Louis XII. Henry VIII. of England was then at war with France, and on the 16th of August, 1513, won the famous "Battle of the Spurs"—so called because the French cavalry sought safety by a precipitous flight. The queen sent James a

Sent him a turquoise ring and glove,
And charged him, as her knight and love,
For her to break a lance,
And strike three strokes with Scottish brand,
And march three miles on Southron land,
And bid the banners of his band
In English breezes dance.
And thus for France's queen he drest
His manly limbs in mailed vest,
And thus admitted English fair
His inmost councils still to share,
And thus for both he madly planned
The ruin of himself and land!
And yet, the sooth to tell,
Nor England's fair nor France's queen
Were worth one pearl-drop, bright and sheen,
From Margaret's eyes that fell, —
His own Queen Margaret, who in Lithgow's[1] bower
All lonely sat and wept the weary hour.

XI.

The queen sits lone in Lithgow pile,
And weeps the weary day
The war against her native soil,
Her monarch's risk in battle broil, —
And in gay Holy-Rood the while
Dame Heron rises with a smile
Upon the harp to play.

ring, still preserved, it is thought, and a large sum of money to induce him to invade the "Southron land," England, and so compel Henry to withdraw his forces from France.

[1] **Lithgow**: Linlithgow Castle.

Fair was her rounded arm, as o'er
The strings her fingers flew;
And as she touched and tuned them all,
Ever her bosom's rise and fall
Was plainer given to view;
For, all for heat, was laid aside
Her wimple,[1] and her hood untied.
And first she pitched her voice to sing,
Then glanced her dark eye on the king,
And then around the silent ring,
And laughed, and blushed, and oft did say
Her pretty oath, by yea and nay,
She could not, would not, durst not play!
At length, upon the harp, with glee,
Mingled with arch simplicity,
A soft yet lively air she rung,
While thus the wily lady sung: —

XII.

LOCHINVAR.

Lady Heron's Song.

Oh! young Lochinvar is come out of the west,
Through all the wide Border his steed was the best;
And save his good broadsword he weapons had none,
He rode all unarmed and he rode all alone.
So faithful in love and so dauntless in war,
There never was knight like the young Lochinvar.

[1] **Wimple**: a kind of partial veil. It covered the head, sides of the face, and chin. Here, it may mean simply a veil for the face.

He stayed not for brake[1] and he stopped not for stone,
He swam the Eske[2] river where ford there was none;
But ere he alighted at Netherby[3] gate
The bride had consented, the gallant came late:
For a laggard in love and a dastard in war
Was to wed the fair Ellen of brave Lochinvar.

So boldly he entered the Netherby Hall,
Among bridesmen, and kinsmen, and brothers, and all:
Then spoke the bride's father, his hand on his sword,—
For the poor craven[4] bridegroom said never a word,—
'Oh! come ye in peace here, or come ye in war,
Or to dance at our bridal, young Lord Lochinvar?'—

'I long wooed your daughter, my suit you denied;
Love swells like the Solway,[5] but ebbs like its tide—
And now am I come, with this lost love of mine,
To lead but one measure,[6] drink one cup of wine.
There are maidens in Scotland more lovely by far,
That would gladly be bride to the young Lochinvar.'

The bride kissed the goblet; the knight took it up,
He quaffed off the wine, and he threw down the cup,
She looked down to blush, and she looked up to sigh,
With a smile on her lips and a tear in her eye.

[1] **Brake**: here ground overgrown with brakes and bushes.

[2] **Eske**: a river on the boundary or border between Scotland and England. It empties into Solway Firth, an estuary of the Irish Sea.

[3] **Netherby**: Netherby Castle on the eastern bank of the Eske, Cumberland, England.

[4] **Craven**: cowardly.

[5] **Swells like the Solway**: the high tides in the Solway are one of its most remarkable features.

[6] **Measure**: a dance.

He took her soft hand ere her mother could bar,—
'Now tread we a measure!' said young Lochinvar.

So stately his form, and so lovely her face,
That never a hall such a galliard[1] did grace;
While her mother did fret, and her father did fume,
And the bridegroom stood dangling his bonnet and plume;
And the bride-maidens whispered, ''Twere better by far
To have matched our fair cousin with young Lochinvar.'

One touch to her hand and one word in her ear,
When they reached the hall-door, and the charger stood near;
So light to the croupe the fair lady he swung,
So light to the saddle before her he sprung!
'She is won! we are gone, over bank, bush, and scaur;[2]
They'll have fleet steeds that follow,' quoth young Lochinvar.

There was mounting 'mong Græmes of the Netherby clan;
Forsters, Fenwicks, and Musgraves, they rode and they ran:
There was racing and chasing on Cannobie Lee,[3]
But the lost bride of Netherby ne'er did they see.
So daring in love and so dauntless in war,
Have ye e'er heard of gallant like young Lochinvar?

[1] **Galliard**: a gay, lively dance.

[2] **Scaur**: precipice.

[3] **Cannobie Lee**: the Cannobie meadows in the vicinity of Netherby Castle.

XIII.

The monarch o'er the siren[1] hung,
And beat the measure as she sung;
And, pressing closer and more near,
He whispered praises in her ear.
In loud applause the courtiers vied,
And ladies winked and spoke aside.
The witching dame to Marmion threw
A glance, where seemed to reign
The pride that claims applauses due,
And of her royal conquest too
A real or feigned disdain:
Familiar was the look, and told
Marmion and she were friends of old.
The king observed their meeting eyes
With something like displeased surprise;
For monarchs ill can rivals brook,
Even in a word, or smile, or look.
Straight took he forth the parchment broad[2]
Which Marmion's high commission showed:
'Our Borders sacked[3] by many a raid,
Our peaceful liege-men[4] robbed,' he said,
'On day of truce our warden slain,
Stout Barton killed, his vessels ta'en —
Unworthy were we here to reign,

[1] **Siren**: here an enticing or dangerous woman. In Greek mythology the sirens were sea-nymphs who enticed sailors to their island by their singing, and then destroyed them.

[2] **Parchment broad**: Rolfe ("The Students' Series of Poetry" — *Marmion*) considers this expression "broad" to refer to the *broad-seal* of Henry VIII. on Marmion's commission. But see note on "Letter broad" on p. 204.

[3] **Sacked**: pillaged.

[4] **Liege-men**: subjects, loyal men.

Should these for vengeance cry in vain;
Our full defiance, hate, and scorn,
Our herald has to Henry borne.'

XIV.

He paused, and led where Douglas[1] stood
And with stern eye the pageant viewed;
I mean that Douglas, sixth of yore,[2]
Who coronet[3] of Angus[4] bore,
And, when his blood and heart were high,
Did the third James in camp defy,
And all his minions[5] led to die
On Lauder's dreary flat.[6]
Princes and favorites long grew tame,
And trembled at the holy name
Of Archibald Bell-the-Cat;
The same who left the dusky vale
Of Hermitage in Liddisdale,[7]
Its dungeons and its towers,

[1] **Douglas**: Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus, who, says Scott, acquired the popular name of *Bell-the-Cat*, because, unlike the mice in the fable, none of which dared bell the cat, Douglas boldly headed a movement by which certain unworthy favorites of King James III. were seized and hanged before his eyes.

[2] **Yore**: of old time, of long ago.

[3] **Corohet**: an inferior crown worn by princes and noblemen.

[4] **Angus**: the first Earl of Douglas married the daughter of the Earl of Angus, and the name later became a synonym for Douglas.

[5] **Minions**: here unworthy favorites or servile dependents.

[6] **Lauder's dreary flat**: Lauderdale is in Berwickshire about 25 miles southeast of Edinburgh.

[7] **Liddisdale**: the remains of Hermitage Castle are on the banks of the Hermitage water, a branch of the Liddell which flows into the Eske. See note on the Eske, p. 182.

Where Bothwell's turrets[1] brave the air,
And Bothwell bank[2] is blooming fair,
To fix his princely bowers.
Though now in age he had laid down
His armor for the peaceful gown,
And for a staff his brand,
Yet often would flash forth the fire
That could in youth a monarch's ire
And minion's pride withstand;
And even that day at council board,
Unapt to soothe his sovereign's mood,
Against the war had Angus stood,
And chafed his royal lord.

XV.

His giant-form, like ruined tower,
Though fallen its muscles' brawny vaunt,
Huge-boned, and tall, and grim, and gaunt,
Seemed o'er the gaudy scene to lower;
His locks and beard in silver grew,
His eyebrows kept their sable hue.
Near Douglas when the monarch stood,
His bitter speech he thus pursued:
'Lord Marmion, since these letters say
That in the North you needs must stay
While slightest hopes of peace remain,
Uncourteous speech it were and stern

[1] **Bothwell's turrets**: the ruins of Bothwell Castle are still to be seen on the banks of the Clyde not far from Glasgow.

[2] **Bothwell bank**: the banks of the Clyde at this point are celebrated for their beauty, and the region is popularly known as "the Garden of Scotland."

To say — Return to Lindisfarne,
Until my herald come again.
Then rest you in Tantallon hold;[1]
Your host shall be the Douglas bold, —
A chief unlike his sires of old.
He wears their motto on his blade,
Their blazon[2] o'er his towers displayed,
Yet loves his sovereign to oppose
More than to face his country's foes.
And, I bethink me, by Saint Stephen,
But e'en this morn to me was given
A prize, the first fruits of the war,
Ta'en by a galley from Dunbar,
A bevy of the maids of heaven.
Under your guard these holy maids
Shall safe return to cloister shades,
And, while they at Tantallon stay,
Requiem[3] for Cochran's soul[4] may say.'
And with the slaughtered favorite's name
Across the monarch's brow there came
A cloud of ire, remorse, and shame.

[1] **Tantallon hold**: the ruins of Tantallon hold or castle are on the coast near North Berwick on the North Sea. They stand on a lofty precipitous rock washed on three sides by the waves. The date of the erection of the castle is unknown. In 1479 Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus (*i.e.* Archibald Bell-the-Cat), received a grant of it from James III. of Scotland, and the bleeding heart of the Douglas arms may still be seen on the crumbling stone shield above the entrance. The next Earl of Angus, after he had lost favor at court, shut himself up in Tantallon, and defied for a time the whole force of the kingdom. The castle was believed to be impregnable, but in 1639 the Covenanters did actually "ding doun Tantallon," and left it in ruins.

[2] **Blazon**: coat-of-arms.

[3] **Requiem**: a service for the dead.

[4] **Cochran's soul**: Cochran, Earl of Mar, was one of the "minions" hanged by Archibald Bell-the-Cat. See note on Douglas, p. 185.

XVI.

In answer nought could Angus speak,
His proud heart swelled well-nigh to break;
He turned aside, and down his cheek
A burning tear there stole.
His hand the monarch sudden took,
That sight his kind heart could not brook:
'Now, by the Bruce's[1] soul,
Angus, my hasty speech forgive!
For sure as doth his spirit live,
As he said of the Douglas old,
I well may say of you, —
That never king did subject hold,
In speech more free, in war more bold,
More tender and more true;
Forgive me, Douglas, once again.' —
And, while the king his hand did strain,
The old man's tears fell down like rain.
To seize the moment Marmion tried,
And whispered to the king aside:
'Oh! let such tears unwonted plead
For respite short from dubious deed!
A child will weep a bramble's smart,
A maid to see her sparrow part,
A stripling for a woman's heart;
But woe awaits a country when
She sees the tears of bearded men.
Then, oh! what omen, dark and high,
When Douglas wets his manly eye!'

[1] **Bruce**: to swear by the soul of Bruce was to swear by valor itself. Edward I. conquered Scotland, but Bruce won Bannockburn. See note, p. 91.

XVII.

Displeased was James that stranger viewed
And tampered with his changing mood.
'Laugh those that can, weep those that may,'
Thus did the fiery monarch say,
'Southward I march by break of day;
And if within Tantallon strong
The good Lord Marmion tarries long,
Perchance our meeting next may fall
At Tamworth in his castle-hall.'—
The haughty Marmion felt the taunt,
And answered grave the royal vaunt,
'Much honored were my humble home,
If in its halls King James should come;
But Nottingham has archers good,
And Yorkshire men are stern of mood,
Northumbrian prickers wild and rude.
On Derby Hills the paths are steep,
In Ouse and Tyne the fords are deep;
And many a banner will be torn,
And many a knight to earth be borne,
And many a sheaf of arrows spent,
Ere Scotland's king shall cross the Trent:[1]
Yet pause, brave prince, while yet you may!'—
The monarch lightly turned away,
And to his nobles loud did call,
'Lords, to the dance,—a hall! a hall!'[2]

[1] **The Trent**: a river of Central England flowing into the Humber. Marmion speaks of it here because a military expedition from Scotland would have to cross the Trent in order to strike Tamworth Castle (see note 4 on p. 26) in Staffordshire.

[2] **A hall**: the ancient cry, says Scott, to make room for a dance.

Himself his cloak and sword flung by,
And led Dame Heron gallantly;
And minstrels, at the royal order,
Rung out 'Blue Bonnets o'er the Border.'[1]

XVIII.

Leave we these revels now to tell
What to Saint Hilda's maids befell,
Whose galley, as they sailed again
To Whitby, by a Scot was ta'en.
Now at Dun-Edin did they bide
Till James should of their fate decide,
And soon by his command
Were gently summoned to prepare
To journey under Marmion's care,
As escort honored, safe, and fair,
Again to English land.
The abbess told her chaplet[2] o'er,
Nor knew which Saint she should implore;
For, when she thought of Constance, sore
She feared Lord Marmion's mood.
And judge what Clara must have felt!
The sword that hung in Marmion's belt
Had drunk De Wilton's blood.
Unwittingly[3] King James had given,

[1] "**Blue Bonnets o'er the Border**": a famous war song; the "blue bonnets" were the Scottish soldiers. Scott speaks of them in the lines:

"England shall many a day
Tell of the bloody fray,
When the blue bonnets came over the border."

[2] **Chaplet**: a string of beads used by Roman Catholics by which to "tell" or count their prayers.

[3] **Unwittingly**: unknowingly.

As guard to Whitby's shades,
The man most dreaded under heaven
By these defenceless maids;
Yet what petition could avail,
Or who would listen to the tale
Of woman, prisoner, and nun,
Mid bustle of a war begun?
They deemed it hopeless to avoid
The convoy[1] of their dangerous guide.

XIX.

Their lodging, so the king assigned,
To Marmion's, as their guardian, joined;
And thus it fell that, passing nigh,
The Palmer caught the abbess' eye,
Who warned him by a scroll[2]
She had a secret to reveal
That much concerned the Church's weal
And health of sinner's soul;
And, with deep charge of secrecy,
She named a place to meet
Within an open balcony,
That hung from dizzy pitch and high
Above the stately street,
To which, as common to each home,
At night they might in secret come.

XX.

At night in secret there they came,
The Palmer and the holy dame.

[1] **Convoy**: escort. [2] **Scroll**: here any communication in writing.

The moon among the clouds rode high,
And all the city hum was by.
Upon the street, where late before
Did din of war and warriors roar,
You might have heard a pebble fall,
A beetle hum, a cricket sing,
An owlet flap his boding wing
On Giles's steeple tall.
The antique buildings, climbing high,
Whose Gothic frontlets[1] sought the sky,
Were here wrapt deep in shade;
There on their brows the moonbeam broke,
Through the faint wreaths of silvery smoke,
And on the casements played.
And other light was none to see,
Save torches gliding far,
Before some chieftain of degree
Who left the royal revelry
To bowne him for the war. —
A solemn scene the abbess chose,
A solemn hour, her secret to disclose.

XXI.

'O holy Palmer!' she began, —
'For sure he must be sainted man,
Whose blessed feet have trod the ground
Where the Redeemer's tomb is found, —
For his dear Church's sake, my tale

[1] **Frontlets**: the frontlet is (1) a band for the forehead; (2) the forehead itself. Here the word may perhaps be used figuratively for ornaments.

Attend, nor deem of light avail,
Though I must speak of worldly love, —
How vain to those who wed above! —
De Wilton and Lord Marmion wooed
Clara de Clare, of Gloster's blood; —
Idle it were of Whitby's dame
To say of that same blood I came; —
And once, when jealous rage was high,
Lord Marmion said despiteously,[1]
Wilton was traitor in his heart,
And had made league with Martin Swart[2]
When he came here on Simnel's[3] part,
And only cowardice did restrain
His rebel aid on Stokefield's[4] plain, —
And down he threw his glove.[5] The thing
Was tried, as wont, before the king;
Where frankly did De Wilton own
That Swart in Guelders[6] he had known,
And that between them then there went
Some scroll of courteous compliment.
For this he to his castle sent;
But when his messenger returned,

[1] **Despiteously**: furiously or maliciously.

[2] **Martin Swart**: Scott says that Swart was a German general who commanded a body of troops sent by the Duchess of Burgundy to fight in behalf of Lambert Simnel. Simnel was a pretender to the crown in Henry VII.'s time. He was utterly defeated at Stokefield, and was contemptuously given the office of scullion in the king's kitchen.

[3] **Simnel**: see Martin Swart, above.

[4] **Stokefield**: in Nottinghamshire, England.

[5] **Glove**: to throw down the glove was to challenge one to combat or "trial by battle." Marmion thus challenges Wilton. It was believed that in trials by battle God would favor the innocent.

[6] **Guelders**: Holland.

Judge how De Wilton's fury burned!
For in his packet there were laid
Letters that claimed disloyal aid
And proved King Henry's cause betrayed.
His fame, thus blighted, in the field
He strove to clear by spear and shield; —
To clear his fame in vain he strove,
For wondrous are His ways above!
Perchance some form[1] was unobserved,
Perchance in prayer or faith he swerved,
Else how could guiltless champion quail,
Or how the blessed ordeal[2] fail?

XXII.

'His squire, who now De Wilton saw
As recreant[3] doomed to suffer law,
Repentant, owned in vain
That while he had the scrolls in care
A stranger maiden, passing fair,
Had drenched him[4] with a beverage rare;
His words no faith could gain.
With Clare alone credence won,
Who, rather than wed Marmion,
Did to Saint Hilda's shrine repair,
To give our house her livings[5] fair

[1] **Form**: some form of words or action required in trial by battle.
[2] **Ordeal**: the trial by battle as a test of innocence.
[3] **Recreant**: a knight, who yielded in combat and confessed himself vanquished, was accounted infamous, and was declared a recreant or coward.
[4] **Drenched him**: induced him to drink.
[5] **Livings**: estates.

And die a vestal votaress[1] there.
The impulse from the earth was given,
But bent her to the paths of heaven.
A purer heart, a lovelier maid,
Ne'er sheltered her in Whitby's shade,
No, not since Saxon Edelfled;
Only one trace of earthly stain,
That for her lover's loss
She cherishes a sorrow vain,
And murmurs at the cross. —
And then her heritage: — it goes
Along the banks of Tame;[2]
Deep fields of grain the reaper mows,
In meadows rich the heifer lows,
The falconer[3] and huntsman knows
Its woodlands for the game.
Shame were it to Saint Hilda dear,
And I, her humble votaress here,
Should do a deadly sin,
Her temple spoiled[4] before mine eyes,
If this false Marmion such a prize
By my consent should win;
Yet hath our boisterous monarch sworn
That Clare shall from our house be torn,

[1] **Vestal votaress**: a maiden devoted by solemn vows to the service of God.

[2] **Tame**: a small river of Staffordshire and Warwickshire. It flows near Tamworth Castle and is a tributary of the Trent.

[3] **Falconer**: one who breeds and trains falcons or hawks for hunting birds and small game.

[4] **Spoiled**: taken by violence, robbed. That is, if Marmion should wed the Lady Clare, he would come into possession (through his conquest of De Wilton, Clare's former lover) of the estate she had given to the convent of St. Hilda.

And grievous cause have I to fear
Such mandate doth Lord Marmion bear.

XXIII.

'Now, prisoner, helpless, and betrayed
To evil power, I claim thine aid,
By every step that thou hast trod
To holy shrine and grotto[1] dim,
By every martyr's tortured limb,
By angel, saint, and seraphim,[2]
And by the Church of God!
For mark: when Wilton was betrayed,
And with his squire forged letters laid,
She was, alas! that sinful maid
By whom the deed was done, —
Oh! shame and horror to be said!
She was — a perjured nun!
No clerk in all the land like her
Traced quaint[3] and varying character.
Perchance you may a marvel deem,
That Marmion's paramour —
For such vile thing she was — should scheme[4]
Her lover's nuptial hour;
But o'er him thus she hoped to gain,
As privy to his honor's stain,
Illimitable power.

[1] **Grotto**: (see Grot, p. 38) grottos or caves were favorite places of retirement for many of the Christian saints in the early and middle ages, and hence were often visited by religious pilgrims.

[2] **Seraphim**: (here used for the singular *seraph*) angels, says Ogilvie's *Imperial Dictionary*, of the highest order.

[3] **Quaint**: here neat or elegant. [4] **Scheme**: plot, plan.

For this she secretly retained
Each proof that might the plot reveal,
Instructions with his hand and seal;
And thus Saint Hilda deigned,
Through sinners' perfidy impure,
Her house's glory to secure
And Clare's immortal weal.

XXIV.

"'Twere long and needless here to tell
How to my hand these papers fell;
With me they must not stay.
Saint Hilda keep her abbess true?
Who knows what outrage he might do
While journeying by the way?—
O blessed Saint, if e'er again
I venturous leave thy calm domain,
To travel or[1] by land or main,[2]
Deep penance may I pay!—
Now, saintly Palmer, mark my prayer:
I give this packet to thy care,
For thee to stop they will not dare;
And oh! with cautious speed
To Wolsey's[3] hand the papers bring,
That he may show them to the king:
And for thy well-earned meed,
Thou holy man, at Whitby's shrine
A weekly mass shall still be thine

[1] **Or**: in sense of either. [2] **Main**: sea.
[3] **Wolsey**: Cardinal Wolsey, he was at one time Henry VIII.'s chief adviser and minister.

While priests can sing and read. —
What ail'st thou? — Speak!' — For as he took
The charge a strong emotion shook
His frame, and ere reply
They heard a faint yet shrilly tone,
Like distant clarion feebly blown,
That on the breeze did die;
And loud the abbess shrieked in fear,
'Saint Withold,[1] save us! — What is here!
Look at yon City Cross!
See on its battled tower appear
Phantoms, that scutcheons seem to rear
And blazoned banners toss!' —

XXV.

Dun-Edin's Cross,[2] a pillared stone,
Rose on a turret octagon; —
But now is razed[3] that monument,
Whence royal edict rang,
And voice of Scotland's law was sent
In glorious trumpet-clang.
Oh! be his tomb as lead to lead
Upon its dull destroyer's head! —

[1] **Saint Withold**: a corrupted form of St. Vitalis.

[2] **Dun-Edin's Cross**: this ancient cross — an elaborate structure about forty feet in height — formerly stood in the High Street, Edinburgh, near St. Giles Church. In early times such crosses were erected in the centre of all important market towns. From them royal proclamations were made. The surmounting pillar of this cross is still preserved within the railings of St. Giles Church, and royal proclamations are still made from the spot — marked by an octagonal figure — on which the cross once stood.

[3] **Razed**: the cross was "razed" — pulled down — in 1756 by the magistrates of Edinburgh on the pretext that it encumbered the street.

A minstrel's malison[1] is said. —
Then on its battlements they saw
A vision, passing nature's law,
Strange, wild, and dimly seen;
Figures that seemed to rise and die,
Gibber,[2] and sign,[3] advance and fly,
While nought confirmed could ear or eye
Discern of sound or mien.
Yet darkly did it seem as[4] there
Heralds and pursuivants prepare,
With trumpet sound and blazon fair,
A summons to proclaim;
But indistinct the pageant proud,
As fancy forms of midnight cloud
When flings the moon upon her shroud
A wavering tinge of flame;
It flits, expands, and shifts, till loud,
From midmost of the spectre crowd,
This awful summons came: —[5]

XXVI.

'Prince, prelate, potentate, and peer,
Whose names I now shall call,

[1] **Malison**: curse.

[2] **Gibber**: jabber, to speak rapidly and inarticulately.

The sheeted dead
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets. — SHAKESPEARE.

[3] **Sign**: make signs or gestures. [4] **As**: as if.

[5] **This awful summons**: "This supernatural citation (or summons)," says Scott, "is mentioned by all our Scottish historians. It was probably like the apparition at Linlithgow (see Canto IV., xvi.-xvii.), an attempt, by those averse to the war (with England), to impose upon the superstitious temper of James IV."

Scottish or foreigner, give ear!
Subjects of him who sent me here,
At his tribunal to appear
I summon one and all:
I cite you by each deadly sin
That e'er hath soiled your hearts within;
I cite you by each brutal lust
That e'er defiled your earthly dust, —
By wrath, by pride, by fear,
By each o'ermastering passion's tone,
By the dark grave and dying groan!
When forty days are passed and gone,
I cite you, at your monarch's throne
To answer and appear.' —
Then thundered forth a roll of names: —
The first was thine, unhappy James!
Then all thy nobles came;
Crawford, Glencairn, Montrose, Argyle,
Ross, Bothwell, Forbes,[1] Lennox, Lyle, —
Why should I tell their separate style?[2]
Each chief of birth and fame,
Of Lowland, Highland, Border, Isle,
Foredoomed to Flodden's carnage pile,
Was cited there by name;
And Marmion, Lord of Fontenaye,
Of Lutterward, and Scrivelbaye;
De Wilton, erst of Aberley,
The self-same thundering voice did say, —
But then another spoke:

[1] **Forbes**: for pronunciation, see note on p. 125.
[2] **Style**: here formal titles of nobility.

'Thy fatal summons I deny
And thine infernal lord defy,
Appealing me[1] to Him on high
Who burst the sinner's yoke.'
At that dread accent, with a scream,
Parted the pageant like a dream.
The summoner was gone.
Prone[2] on her face the abbess fell,
And fast, and fast, her beads did tell;[3]
Her nuns came, startled by the yell,
And found her there alone.
She marked not, at the scene aghast,
What time or how the Palmer passed.

XXVII.

Shift we the scene. — The camp doth move;
Dun-Edin's streets are empty now,
Save when, for weal of those they love
To pray the prayer and vow the vow,
The tottering child, the anxious fair,
The gray-haired sire, with pious care,
To chapels and to shrines repair. —
Where is the Palmer now? and where
The abbess, Marmion, and Clare? —
Bold Douglas! to Tantallon fair
They journey in thy charge:
Lord Marmion rode on his right hand,

[1] **Appealing me**: making my appeal.
[2] **Prone**: flat, with face downward.
[3] **Beads did tell**: counted her beads in prayer. (See note on "Chaplet," p. 190.)

The Palmer still was with the band;
Angus, like Lindesay, did command
That none should roam at large.
But in that Palmer's altered mien
A wondrous change might now be seen;
Freely he spoke of war,
Of marvels wrought by single hand
When lifted for a native land,
And still looked high, as if he planned
Some desperate deed afar.
His courser would he feed and stroke,
And, tucking up his sable frock,
Would first his metal bold provoke,
Then soothe or quell his pride.
Old Hubert said that never one
He saw, except Lord Marmion,
A steed so fairly ride.

XXVIII.

Some half-hour's march behind there came,
By Eustace governed fair,
A troop escorting Hilda's dame,
With all her nuns and Clare.
No audience had Lord Marmion sought;
Ever he feared to aggravate
Clara de Clare's suspicious hate;
And safer 'twas, he thought,
To wait till, from the nuns removed,
The influence of kinsmen loved,
And suit by Henry's self approved,
Her slow consent had wrought.

His was no flickering flame, that dies
Unless when fanned by looks and sighs
And lighted oft at lady's eyes;
He longed to stretch his wide command
O'er luckless Clara's ample land:
Besides, when Wilton with him vied,
Although the pang of humbled pride
The place of jealousy supplied,
Yet conquest, by that meanness won
He almost loathed to think upon,
Led him, at times, to hate the cause
Which made him burst through honor's laws.
If e'er he loved, 'twas her alone
Who died within that vault of stone.

XXIX.

And now, when close at hand they saw
North Berwick's town and lofty Law,[1]
Fitz-Eustace bade them pause awhile
Before a venerable pile[2]
Whose turrets viewed afar
The lofty Bass,[3] the Lambie Isle,[4]
The ocean's peace or war.

[1] **Law**: a hill. North Berwick Law is over six hundred feet high, and from it, on a clear day, a grand view may be had of the Bass Rock, Tantallon Castle, and other points of interest on the coast.

[2] **Venerable pile**: a convent then standing near North Berwick.

[3] **Bass**: The Bass Rock is a rocky islet near North Berwick. It rises to an altitude of over three hundred feet above the sea. Fronting it, on the coast, is Tantallon Castle. On the summit of the Rock are the remains of old fortifications. In 1671 these were converted into a state prison for the Covenanters.

[4] **Lambie Isle**: a small island not very far from the Bass Rock.

At tolling of a bell, forth came
The convent's venerable dame,
And prayed Saint Hilda's abbess rest
With her, a loved and honored guest,
Till Douglas should a bark prepare
To waft her back to Whitby fair.
Glad was the abbess, you may guess,[1]
And thanked the Scottish prioress;
And tedious were to tell, I ween,
The courteous speech that passed between.
O'erjoyed the nuns their palfreys leave;
But when fair Clara did intend,
Like them, from horseback to descend,
Fitz-Eustace said: 'I grieve,
Fair lady, grieve e'en from my heart,
Such gentle company to part;—
Think not discourtesy,
But lords' commands must be obeyed,
And Marmion and the Douglas said
That you must wend[2] with me.
Lord Marmion hath a letter broad,[3]
Which to the Scottish earl he showed,
Commanding that beneath his care
Without delay you shall repair
To your good kinsman, Lord Fitz-Clare.'

[1] **Guess**: the original meaning of this much abused word is to conjecture or surmise; but it not infrequently occurs in standard English authors, even as late as Wordsworth, in the looser sense of think, suppose, or imagine. The common colloquial use of "guess" to express what we have no doubt about, Webster says should be branded as a vulgarism.

[2] **Wend**: (present tense of went) go.

[3] **Letter broad** (see note on "Broad" on p. 184): some authorities consider the expression to mean an open letter or patent, a name given originally to a letter open to perusal, conferring some right or privilege on the holder.

XXX.

The startled abbess loud exclaimed;
But she at whom the blow was aimed
Grew pale as death and cold as lead, —
She deemed she heard her death-doom read.
'Cheer thee, my child!' the abbess said,
'They dare not tear thee from my hand,
To ride alone with armed band.' —
'Nay, holy mother, nay,'
Fitz-Eustace said, 'the lovely Clare
Will be in Lady Angus' care,
In Scotland while we stay;
And when we move an easy ride
Will bring us to the English side,
Female attendance to provide
Befitting Gloster's heir;
Nor thinks nor dreams my noble lord,
By slightest look, or act, or word,
To harass Lady Clare.
Her faithful guardian he will be,
Nor sue for slightest courtesy
That e'en to stranger falls,
Till he shall place her safe and free
Within her kinsman's halls.'
He spoke, and blushed with earnest grace;
His faith was painted on his face,
And Clare's worst fear relieved.
The Lady Abbess loud exclaimed
On[1] Henry,[2] and the Douglas blamed,

[1] **Exclaimed on**: exclaimed against.
[2] **Henry**: Henry VIII. of England.

Entreated, threatened, grieved,
To martyr, saint, and prophet prayed,
Against Lord Marmion inveighed,
And called the prioress to aid,
To curse with candle, bell, and book.[1]
Her head the grave Cistertian[2] shook:
'The Douglas and the king,' she said,
'In their commands will be obeyed;
Grieve not, nor dream that harm can fall
The maiden in Tantallon Hall.'

XXXI.

The abbess, seeing strife was vain,
Assumed her wonted state again,—
For much of state she had,—
Composed[3] her veil, and raised her head,
And 'Bid,' in solemn voice she said,
'Thy master, bold and bad,
The records of his house turn o'er,
And, when he shall there written see
That one of his own ancestry
Drove the monks forth[4] of Coventry,[5]

[1] **To curse with candle, bell, and book**: a solemn mode of excommunication or expulsion from the church, formerly used in the Catholic Church. The officiating clergyman read the formula of excommunication from the book of religious services, then the bell of the church was tolled, as for the dead, the service-book was closed, and a lighted candle was cast upon the ground, with an imprecation that the soul of the person so cut off from the church might, like that candle, be extinguished in smoke and stench.

[2] **Cistertian**: a monk or nun of the Cistercian Order; so called because it was founded (1098) at Cistercium (Citeaux), France.

[3] **Composed**: arranged, put in order. [4] **Forth**: *i.e.* out.

[5] **Coventry**: this, says Scott, relates to a real Robert de Marmion, who

Bid him his fate explore!
  Prancing in pride of earthly trust,
  His charger hurled him to the dust,
  And, by a base plebeian thrust,
He died his band before.[1]
  God judge 'twixt Marmion and me;
  He is a chief of high degree,
And I a poor recluse,[2]
  Yet oft in holy writ we see
  Even such weak minister as me
May the oppressor bruise;
For thus, inspired, did Judith[3] slay
  The mighty in his sin,
And Jael thus, and Deborah'—[4]
  Here hasty Blount broke in:
'Fitz-Eustace, we must march our band;
Saint Anton'[5] fire thee![6] wilt thou stand
All day, with bonnet in thy hand,
To hear the lady preach?
By this good light![7] if thus we stay,
Lord Marmion for our fond[8] delay
  Will sharper sermon teach.

in the reign of King Stephen drove out the monks from the church of Coventry. Shortly after his horse fell in a combat and Marmion was slain. This was regarded as a judgment of God for his action at Coventry.

[1] **His band before**: that is in sight of his troops.

[2] **Recluse**: here nun.

[3] **Judith**: a Jewish heroine (see the Book of Judith in the Apocrypha) who killed the Assyrian general, Holofernes, and so saved her town from capture.

[4] **Jael** and **Deborah**: see Judges iv.

[5] **Saint Anton**: Saint Antony or Anthony.

[6] **Fire thee**: afflict thee with the disease (erysipelas) popularly known as St. Antony's fire.

[7] **By this good light**: a form of oath.

[8] **Fond**: foolish.

Come, don thy cap and mount thy horse;
The dame must patience take perforce.'[1]

XXXII.

'Submit we then to force,' said Clare,
'But let this barbarous lord despair
His purposed aim to win;
Let him take living, land, and life,
But to be Marmion's wedded wife
In me were deadly sin:
And if it be the king's decree
That I must find no sanctuary[2]
In that inviolable dome[3]
Where even a homicide might come
And safely rest his head,
Though at its open portals stood,
Thirsting to pour forth blood for blood,
The kinsmen of the dead;
Yet one asylum is my own
Against the dreaded hour,—
A low, a silent, and a lone,
Where kings have little power.
One victim[4] is before me there.—
Mother, your blessing, and in prayer

[1] **Perforce**: of necessity.

[2] **Sanctuary**: place of protection. Formerly certain churches were set apart as refuges or asylums for fugitives from justice and persons in danger or distress. Unless they had committed treason or sacrilege, they were secure, while in sanctuary, against arrest or molestation for a specified time, at the end of which they were free to leave; if criminals, to leave the country.

[3] **Dome**: church.

[4] **One victim**: alluding to the death of Constance de Beverley (see Canto II., xxxii.).

Remember your unhappy Clare!'
Loud weeps the abbess, and bestows
  Kind blessings many a one;
Weeping and wailing loud arose,
Round patient Clare, the clamorous woes
  Of every simple nun.
His eyes the gentle Eustace dried,
And scarce rude Blount the sight could bide.
  Then took the squire her rein,
And gently led away her steed,
And by each courteous word and deed
  To cheer her strove in vain.

XXXIII.

But scant three miles the band had rode,
  When o'er a height they passed,
And, sudden, close before them showed
  His towers Tantallon vast,
Broad, massive, high, and stretching far,
And held impregnable in war.
On a projecting rock they rose,
And round three sides the ocean flows,
The fourth did battled walls enclose
  And double mound[1] and fosse.
By narrow drawbridge, outworks strong,
Through studded gates, an entrance long,
  To the main court they cross.
It was a wide and stately square;
Around were lodgings fit and fair,
  And towers of various form,

[1] **Double mound**: double ramparts of earth or stone.

Which on the court projected far
And broke its lines quadrangular.
Here was square keep, there turret high,
Or pinnacle that sought the sky,
Whence oft the warder could descry
The gathering ocean-storm.

XXXIV.

Here did they rest. — The princely care
Of Douglas why should I declare?
Or say they met reception fair?
Or why the tidings say,
Which varying to Tantallon came,
By hurrying posts[1] or fleeter fame,
With every varying day?
And, first, they heard King James had won
Etall, and Wark, and Ford;[2] and then
That Norham Castle strong was ta'en.
At that sore marvelled Marmion,
And Douglas hoped his monarch's hand
Would soon subdue Northumberland;
But whispered news there came,
That while his host inactive lay,
And melted by degrees away,
King James was dallying off the day
With Heron's wily dame.[3]
Such acts to chronicles I yield;

[1] **Posts**: mounted messengers. They rode at high speed and had relays of horses ready for them at certain points.

[2] **Etall, Wark, Ford, Norham**: all these castles, or their remains, are in England, near the Scottish border.

[3] **Heron's wily dame**: see stanza x.

Go seek them there and see:
Mine is a tale of Flodden Field,[1]
And not a history.—
At length they heard the Scottish host
On that high ridge had made their post[2]
Which frowns o'er Millfield Plain;[3]
And that brave Surrey many a band
Had gathered in the Southern land,
And marched into Northumberland,
And camp at Wooler[4] ta'en.
Marmion, like charger in the stall,
That hears, without, the trumpet-call,
Began to chafe and swear:—
'A sorry[5] thing to hide my head
In castle, like a fearful maid,
When such a field is near.
Needs must I see this battle-day;
Death to my fame if such a fray
Were fought and Marmion away!
The Douglas, too, I wot[6] not why,
Hath bated[7] of his courtesy;
No longer in his halls I'll stay:
Then bade his band they should array
For march against the dawning day.

[1] **Flodden Field**: see note on *Marmion*, p. 1.
[2] **Made their post**: taken up their position.
[3] **Millfield Plain**: this is about five miles southeast of Flodden Field.
[4] **Wooler**: a town on the southern declivity of the Cheviot Hills which form part of the boundary between Scotland and England.
[5] **Sorry**: poor, mean, wretched.
[6] **Wot**: know.
[7] **Bated**: abated.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO SIXTH.

To RICHARD HEBER, Esq.[1]

Mertoun House,[2] *Christmas.*

HEAP on more wood! — the wind is chill;
But let it whistle as it will,
We'll keep our Christmas merry still.
Each age has deemed the new-born year
The fittest time for festal cheer:
Even, heathen yet, the savage Dane,
At Iol[3] more deep the mead[4] did drain,
High on the beach his galleys drew,
And feasted all his pirate crew;

[1] **Richard Heber, Esq.**: a half-brother of Bishop Heber, the poet. He was a member of Parliament, 1821–1826, but was noted chiefly as a classical scholar and book-collector. He spent about $900,000 in this way, and owned a number of large libraries in London, Paris, Oxford, and elsewhere. He was one of Scott's most intimate friends.

[2] **Mertoun House**: this introduction was written at Mertoun House, the residence of Hugh Scott, Esq., on the Tweed, a short distance below Dryburgh Abbey. Mr. Scott was a distant kinsman of Sir Walter's.

[3] **Iol**: Scott says that the Iol of the heathen Danes (a word preserved in the English Yule, and still applied to Christmas in Scotland) was solemnized with great festivity. At table, on that occasion, the feasters amused themselves by pelting each other with bones.

In their dances round great fires of pine trees, they danced with such fury, holding each other by the hands, that if the grasp of any one failed, he was pitched into the fire with the velocity of a sling. The sufferer was instantly plucked out and compelled to drink a huge measure of ale as a penalty "for spoiling the king's fire."

[4] **Mead**: a fermented liquor made from honey and malt, and flavored with spices.

Then in his low and pine-built hall,
Where shields and axes decked the wall,
They gorged upon the half-dressed steer,
Caroused in seas of sable beer,
While round in brutal jest were thrown
The half-gnawed rib and marrowbone,
Or listened all in grim delight
While scalds[1] yelled out the joys of fight.
Then forth in frenzy would they hie,[2]
While wildly loose their red locks fly,
And dancing round the blazing pile,
They make such barbarous mirth the while
As best might to the mind recall
The boisterous joys of Odin's[3] hall.

And well our Christian sires of old
Loved when the year its course had rolled,
And brought blithe Christmas back again
With all his hospitable train.
Domestic and religious rite
Gave honor to the holy night;
On Christmas eve the bells were rung,
On Christmas eve the mass was sung:
That only night in all the year
Saw the stoled[4] priest the chalice[5] rear.

[1] **Scalds**: ancient Scandinavian poets.

[2] **Hie**: hasten, run.

[3] **Odin** or **Woden**: the greatest of the Scandinavian gods — ruler of heaven and earth. The name Wednesday is derived from this deity. He feasted the souls of brave warriors in Valhalla, his great celestial hall.

[4] **Stoled**: wearing the stole, a long, narrow scarf.

[5] **Chalice**: the communion cup. In Roman Catholic countries, says Scott — and he is speaking of Great Britain when it was Roman Catholic — mass (communion service) is never said at night except on Christmas eve.

The damsel donned her kirtle sheen;
The hall was dressed with holly green;
Forth to the wood did merrymen go,
To gather in the mistletoe.[1]
Then opened wide the baron's hall
To vassal, tenant, serf,[2] and all;
Power laid his rod of rule aside,
And Ceremony doffed his pride.
The heir, with roses in his shoes,
That night might village partner choose;
The lord, underogating,[3] share
The vulgar game of 'post and pair.'[4]
All hailed, with uncontrolled delight
And general voice, the happy night
That to the cottage, as the crown,
Brought tidings of salvation down.

The fire, with well-dried logs supplied,
Went roaring up the chimney wide;
The huge hall-table's oaken face,
Scrubbed till it shone, the day to grace,
Bore then upon its massive board
No mark[5] to part the squire and lord.

[1] **Mistletoe**: an evergreen plant bearing small, yellowish-green flowers and white berries. It grows parasitically on various trees, but seldom on the oak. The Scandinavians and the Druids held it in great veneration. In England it is still gathered at Christmas, and the custom of kissing under the mistletoe forms no small part of the merriment at that time.

[2] **Serf**: a farm-laborer who was bound to the soil and could be sold with it; serfdom existed in Scotland long after it had ceased in England.

[3] **Underogating**: without losing dignity or lessening rank.

[4] **Post and pair**: a game at cards.

[5] **No mark**: this mark, used to separate the humbler guests from those of rank and wealth, was generally a large salt-cellar.

Then was brought in the lusty brawn[1]
By old blue-coated serving-man;
Then the grim boar's-head frowned on high,[2]
Crested with bays and rosemary.
Well can the green-garbed[3] ranger tell
How, when, and where, the monster fell,
What dogs before his death he tore,
And all the baiting[4] of the boar.
The wassail round, in good brown bowls
Garnished with ribbons, blithely trowls.[5]
There the huge sirloin reeked;[6] hard by[7]
Plum-porridge stood and Christmas pie;
Nor failed old Scotland to produce
At such high tide[8] her savory goose.
Then came the merry maskers in,
And carols roared with blithesome din;
If unmelodious was the song,
It was a hearty note and strong.
Who lists[9] may in their mumming[10] see
Traces of ancient mystery;[11]
White shirts supplied the masquerade,
And smutted cheeks the visors[12] made;

[1] **Brawn**: boar's flesh prepared in a peculiar manner.

[2] **Boar's-head frowned on high**: either alluding to the head being brought in on a platter decked with bays and rosemary, or to the ornament of a boar's head appended to the wall and crested with Christmas greens.

[3] **Green-garbed**: the rangers or hunters usually wore a suit of "Lincoln green."

[4] **Baiting**: here hunting with dogs.

[5] **Trowls**: passes from hand to hand.

[6] **Reeked**: smoked or steamed.

[7] **Hard by**: close by.

[8] **High tide**: holiday.

[9] **Lists**: chooses, likes.

[10] **Mumming**: masquerade.

[11] **Mystery**: a sacred dramatic representation, such as was common in the middle ages; scriptural stories and lives of the saints formed the basis of the mystery or play.

[12] **Visors**: here masks.

But oh! what maskers, richly dight,
Can boast of bosoms half so light!
England was merry England when
Old Christmas brought his sports again.
'Twas Christmas broached the mightiest ale,
'Twas Christmas told the merriest tale;
A Christmas gambol oft could cheer
The poor man's heart through half the year.

Still linger in our northern clime
Some remnants of the good old time,
And still within our valleys here
We hold the kindred title dear,
Even when, perchance, its far-fetched claim
To Southron ear sounds empty name;
For course of blood, our proverbs deem,
Is warmer[1] than the mountain-stream.
And thus my Christmas still I hold
Where my great-grandsire came of old,
With amber[2] beard and flaxen hair
And reverend apostolic air,
The feast and holy-tide[3] to share,
And mix sobriety with wine,
And honest mirth with thoughts divine:
Small thought was his, in after time
E'er to be hitched into a rhyme.

[1] **Blood . . . is warmer**: alluding to the proverb that "Blood is warmer than water." A proverb, says Scott, "meant to vindicate our family predilections." The common saying is: "Blood is thicker than water."

[2] **Amber**: *i.e.* amber or yellow-colored. Scott says that this and the next few lines were imitated by him from a poetical invitation to spend Christmas, addressed to his relative by the grandfather of Mr. Scott of Harden (Mertoun House).

[3] **Holy-tide**: holy or holiday season.

The simple sire could only boast
That he was loyal to his cost,
The banished race of kings revered,
And lost his land, — but kept his beard.[1]

In these dear halls, where welcome kind
Is with fair liberty combined,
Where cordial friendship gives the hand,
And flies constraint the magic wand
Of the fair dame[2] that rules the land,
Little we heed the tempest drear,
While music, mirth, and social cheer
Speed on their wings the passing year.
And Mertoun's halls are fair e'en now,
When not a leaf is on the bough.
Tweed loves them well, and turns again,
As loathe to leave the sweet domain,
And holds his mirror to her face,
And clips[3] her with a close embrace: —
Gladly as he we seek the dome,[4]
And as reluctant turn us home.

How just that at this time of glee
My thoughts should, Heber, turn to thee!
For many a merry hour we've known,

[1] **Kept his beard**: the venerable Mr. Scott here referred to had been a devoted adherent of the Stuarts. When, by the English Civil War and the execution of Charles I., Prince Charles (afterward Charles II.) was driven into exile, Mr. Scott, who lost his property in the war, swore that he would not shave his beard until the Stuarts came to the throne again.

[2] **Fair dame**: Lady Scott, wife of the Hugh Scott, Esq., of Mertoun House, to whom the introduction to the Sixth Canto of *Marmion* is addressed.

[3] **Clips**: clasps.

[4] **Dome**: here house; *i.e.* Mertoun House.

And heard the chimes of midnight's tone.
Cease, then, my friend! a moment cease,
And leave these classic tomes in peace!
Of Roman and of Grecian lore
Sure mortal brain can hold no more.
These ancients, as Noll Bluff[1] might say,
'Were pretty fellows in their day,'
But time and tide o'er all prevail —
On Christmas eve a Christmas tale —
Of wonder and of war — 'Profane!
What! leave the lofty Latian[2] strain,
Her stately prose, her verse's charms,
To hear the clash of rusty arms;
In Fairy-land or Limbo[3] lost,
To jostle conjurer and ghost,
Goblin and witch!' — 'Nay, Heber dear,
Before you touch my charter,[4] hear;
Though Leyden[5] aids, alas! no more,
My cause with many-languaged lore,
This may I say: — in realms of death
Ulysses meets Alcides' *wraith*,[6]
Æneas upon Thracia's shore

[1] **Noll Bluff**: Captain Noll Bluff, a swaggerer and a coward in Congreve's play of *The Old Bachelor;* the quotation which follows is an adaptation of one of the captain's sayings.

[2] **Latian**: Latin.

[3] **Limbo**: originally a supposed borderland of hell; but here any region apart from this world.

[4] **Touch my charter**: interfere with my right or liberty.

[5] **Leyden**: Dr. John Leyden. He had been, says Lockhart, of great service to Scott in the preparation of his *Border Minstrelsy*. He died in Java in 1811.

[6] **Wraith**: the ghost of Alcides, another name for Hercules. See Homer's *Odyssey*.

The ghost of murdered Polydore;[1]
For omens,[2] we in Livy cross
At every turn *locutus Bos*.[3]
As grave and duly speaks that ox
As if he told the price of stocks,
Or held in Rome republican
The place of Common-councilman.

All nations have their omens drear,
Their legends wild of woe and fear.
To Cambria[4] look — the peasant see
Bethink him of Glendowerdy[5]
And shun 'the Spirit's Blasted Tree.' — [6]
The Highlander, whose red claymore[7]
The battle turned on Maida's[8] shore,
Will on a Friday morn look pale,
If asked to tell a fairy tale:
He fears the vengeful Elfin King,
Who leaves that day his grassy ring;[9]

[1] **Polydore**: Polydorus (*Æneid*, III., 19).

[2] **Omens**: events or signs thought to portend either good or evil.

[3] **Locutus Bos**: the ox spake. [4] **Cambria**: Wales.

[5] **Glendowerdy**: literally the estate of Glendower (or Glendowr), a celebrated Welsh chieftain of the century. Here the word appears to be used for Glendower himself.

[6] **Spirit's Blasted Tree**: a Welsh legend represents two Welsh chieftains, Howel Sele and Owen Glendowr, as fighting a mortal combat. Glendowr comes off conqueror; his adversary is buried under a blasted oak which is henceforth haunted by his angry spirit.

[7] **Claymore**: originally a long, heavy sword requiring both hands to wield it.

[8] **Maida**: a small town near Naples. Here the British forces, under Sir John Stuart, gained a noted victory over the French in 1806.

[9] **Grassy ring**: a ring in the grass caused by the growth of certain plants, but popularly supposed to be caused by elves or fairies dancing in a circle.

Invisible to human ken,
He walks among the sons of men.

Didst e'er, dear Heber, pass along
Beneath the towers of Franchémont,[1]
Which, like an eagle's nest in air,
Hang o'er the stream and hamlet fair?
Deep in their vaults, the peasants say,
A mighty treasure buried lay,
Amassed through rapine and through wrong
By the last Lord of Franchémont.
The iron chest is bolted hard,
A huntsman sits its constant guard;
Around his neck his horn is hung,
His hanger[2] in his belt is slung;
Before his feet his bloodhounds lie:
And 'twere not for his gloomy eye,
Whose withering glance no heart can brook,
As true a huntsman doth he look
As bugle e'er in brake did sound,
Or ever hallooed to a hound.
To chase the fiend and win the prize
In that same dungeon ever tries
An aged necromantic[3] priest;
It is an hundred years at least
Since 'twixt them first the strife begun,
And neither yet has lost nor won.

[1] **Franchémont**: a castle in Belgium about 10 miles southeast of Liege.
[2] **Hanger**: a short, heavy broadsword.
[3] **Necromantic**: versed in necromancy, or the pretended art of revealing the fortune by means of communication with the dead; also versed in magic or conjuration.

And oft the conjurer's words will make
The stubborn demon groan and quake;
And oft the bands of iron break,
Or bursts one lock that still amain,
Fast as 'tis opened, shuts again.
That magic strife within the tomb
May last until the day of doom,
Unless the adept[1] shall learn to tell
The very word that clenched the spell
When Franch'mont locked the treasure cell.
An hundred years are passed and gone,
And scarce three letters has he won.

Such general superstition may
Excuse for old Pitscottie[2] say,
Whose gossip history has given
My song the messenger from heaven[3]
That warned, in Lithgow, Scotland's king,
Nor less the infernal summoning;[4]
May pass[5] the Monk of Durham's tale,[6]
Whose demon fought in Gothic mail;
May pardon plead for Fordun[7] grave,

[1] **Adept**: here an expert in magic.

[2] **Pitscottie**: Robert Lindsay of Pitscottie, Scotland, author of the *Chronicles of Scotland*, 1436–1565. He was born early in the sixteenth century.

[3] **Messenger from heaven**: alluding to the incident narrated in Canto IV., xvi.

[4] **The infernal summoning**: alluding to the incident narrated in Canto V., xxv., xxvi.

[5] **Pass**: surpass.

[6] **Monk of Durham's tale**: this appears to refer to Canto III., xxii.–xxiv., though Scott does not there mention the Monk of Durham in connection with the tale.

[7] **Fordun**: an ancient Scottish historian. The story of the Goblin Hall (see Canto III., xix.) is based on what he relates.

Who told of Gifford's Goblin-Cave.
But why such instances to you,
Who in an instant can renew
Your treasured hoards of various lore,[1]
And furnish twenty thousand more?
Hoards, not like theirs whose volumes rest
Like treasures in the Franch'mont chest,[2]
While gripple[3] owners still refuse,
To others what they cannot use;
Give them the priest's whole century,[4]
They shall not spell you letters three,[5] —
Their pleasure in the books the same
The magpie takes in pilfered gem.[6]
Thy volumes,[7] open as thy heart,
Delight, amusement, science, art,
To every ear and eye impart;
Yet who, of all who thus employ them,
Can like the owner's self enjoy them? —
But, hark! I hear the distant drum!
The day of Flodden Field is come, —
Adieu, dear Heber! life and health,
And store of literary wealth.

[1] **Hoards of various lore**: see note below on "Volumes."

[2] **Franch'mont chest**: referring to the legend of buried treasures in Franchémont Castle. See p. 220.

[3] **Gripple**: grasping, miserly.

[4] **The priest's whole century**: referring to the tradition of the "necromantic priest's" hundred years' strife for the treasure. See line 189, above.

[5] **Spell you letters three**: make out or decipher so much as three letters.

[6] **Pilfered gem**: the magpie — a bird of the crow family — is noted for its crafty instincts and its propensity to purloin and secrete glittering articles.

[7] **Thy volumes**: alluding to Heber's enormous collections of books. See note on "Heber," p. 212.

Canto Sixth.

THE BATTLE.

I.

While great events were on the gale,
And each hour brought a varying tale,
And the demeanor, changed and cold,
Of Douglas fretted Marmion bold,
And, like the impatient steed of war,
He snuffed the battle from afar,
And hopes were none that back again
Herald should come from Terouenne,[1]
Where England's king in leaguer[2] lay,
Before decisive battle-day, —
While these things were, the mournful Clare
Did in the Dame's devotions share;
For the good countess ceaseless prayed
To Heaven and saints her sons to aid,
And with short interval did pass
From prayer to book, from book to mass,
And all in high baronial pride, —
A life both dull and dignified:
Yet, as Lord Marmion nothing pressed,
Upon her intervals of rest,
Dejected Clara well could bear

[1] **Terouenne**: a town of France, about 30 miles southeast of Calais. Henry VIII. of England was then besieging it.

[2] **Leaguer**: camp.

The formal state, the lengthened prayer
Though dearest to her wounded heart
The hours that she might spend apart.

II.

I said Tantallon's dizzy steep
Hung o'er the margin of the deep.
Many a rude tower and rampart there
Repelled the insult of the air,
Which, when the tempest vexed the sky,
Half breeze, half spray, came whistling by.
Above the rest a turret square
Did o'er its Gothic entrance bear,
Of sculpture rude, a stony shield;
The Bloody Heart[1] was in the field,
And in the chief[2] three mullets[3] stood,
The cognizance[4] of Douglas blood.[5]
The turret held a narrow stair,
Which, mounted, gave you access, where
A parapet's[6] embattled[7] row
Did seaward round the castle go.
Sometimes in dizzy steps descending,

[1] **Bloody Heart**: a device in the arms of the Douglas family representing a bleeding heart. The *field* is the general surface of the shield or escutcheon. On the attempt of Douglas to carry the heart of the Bruce to the Holy Land, see Ginn & Co.'s *Heroic Ballads*. The bleeding heart in the Douglas arms represents, it is said, this "heart of the Bruce."

[2] **Chief**: the upper part of the shield or escutcheon.

[3] **Mullets**: star-shaped figures, intended to represent the rowels or pointed wheels of spurs.

[4] **Cognizance**: badge, coat-of-arms.

[5] **Douglas blood**: the Douglas family.

[6] **Parapet**: a breast-high wall.

[7] **Embattled**: same as battled (see note on p. 18).

Sometimes in narrow circuit bending,
Sometimes in platform broad extending,
Its varying circle did combine
Bulwark, and bartizan,[1] and line,[2]
And bastion,[3] tower, and vantage-coign.[4]
Above the booming ocean leant
The far-projecting battlement;
The billows burst in ceaseless flow
Upon the precipice below.
Where'er Tantallon faced the land,
Gate-works and walls were strongly manned;
No need upon the sea-girt side:
The steepy rock and frantic tide
Approach of human step denied,
And thus these lines and ramparts rude
Were left in deepest solitude.

III.

And, for they were so lonely, Clare
Would to these battlements repair,
And muse upon her sorrows there,
And list the sea-bird's cry,
Or slow, like noontide ghost, would glide
Along the dark-gray bulwark's side,

[1] **Bartizan**: a small, overhanging turret pierced with apertures for an archer to discharge arrows through. Bartizans generally project from the angles on the top of a tower or from the rampart.

[2] **Line**: a rampart.

[3] **Bastion**: a V-shaped mass of earth or stone projecting from a rampart or wall. It enables the defenders of a fortification to defend the rampart more effectively.

[4] **Vantage-coign**: a corner of advantage, a corner good both for protection and for attack against an enemy.

And ever on the heaving tide
Look down with weary eye.
Oft did the cliff and swelling main
Recall the thoughts of Whitby's fane,—[1]
A home she ne'er might see again;
For she had laid adown,[2]
So Douglas bade, the hood and veil,
And frontlet[3] of the cloister pale,[4]
And Benedictine gown:[5]
It were unseemly[6] sight, he said,
A novice out of convent shade.—
Now her bright locks with sunny glow
Again adorned her brow of snow;
Her mantle rich, whose borders round
A deep and fretted broidery bound,
In golden foldings sought the ground;
Of holy ornament, alone
Remained a cross with ruby stone;
And often did she look
On that which in her hand she bore,
With velvet bound and broidered o'er,
Her breviary book.[7]

[1] **Fane**: a church or other building consecrated to religion.

[2] **Adown**: down or aside.

[3] **Frontlet**: a fillet or band worn on the forehead.

[4] **Cloister pale**: the convent enclosure; or pale may be used adjectively to describe the light of the convent, especially of the cloisters or covered walk.

[5] **Benedictine gown**: a loose gown with large, wide sleeves, and a cowl for covering the head, such as was worn by Benedictine monks.

[6] **Unseemly**: unbecoming, unfit.

[7] **Breviary book**: an abbreviated (hence the name, *Breviary*) religious service-book used in the Catholic Church and practically equivalent to a prayer-book.

In such a place, so lone, so grim,
At dawning pale or twilight dim,
It fearful would have been
To meet a form so richly dressed,
With book in hand, and cross on breast,
And such a woful mien.
Fitz-Eustace, loitering with his bow,
To practise on the gull and crow,
Saw her at distance gliding slow,
And did by Mary[1] swear
Some lovelorn[2] fay she might have been,
Or in romance some spell-bound[3] queen,
For ne'er in work-day world was seen
A form so witching[4] fair.

IV.

Once walking thus at evening tide,
It chanced a gliding sail she spied,
And sighing thought — 'The abbess there
Perchance does to her home repair;
Her peaceful rule, where Duty free
Walks hand in hand with Charity,
Where oft Devotion's tranced glow
Can such a glimpse of heaven bestow
That the enraptured sisters see
High vision and deep mystery, —
The very form of Hilda fair,
Hovering upon the sunny air

[1] **Mary**: the Virgin Mary.
[2] **Lovelorn**: pining or suffering from love.
[3] **Spell-bound**: enchanted or bound as by a charm.
[4] **Witching**: bewitching.

And smiling on her votaries' prayer.
Oh! wherefore to my duller eye
Did still the saint her form deny?
Was it that, seared by sinful scorn,
My heart could neither melt nor burn?
Or lie my warm affections low
With him that taught them first to glow?
Yet gentle abbess, well I knew
To pay thy kindness grateful due,
And well could brook the mild command
That ruled thy simple maiden band.
How different now, condemned to bide
My doom from this dark tyrant's pride! —
But Marmion has to learn ere long
That constant mind and hate of wrong
Descended to a feeble girl
From Red de Clare, stout Gloster's Earl:
Of such a stem a sapling weak,
He ne'er shall bend, although he break.

V.

'But see! — what makes[1] this armor here?' —
For in her path there lay
Targe, corselet, helm; — she viewed them near. —
'The breastplate pierced! — Ay, much I fear,
Weak fence[2] wert thou 'gainst foeman's spear,
That hath made fatal entrance here,
As these dark blood-gouts[3] say. —
Thus Wilton! — Oh! not corselet's ward,[4]

[1] **Makes**: does.
[2] **Fence**: defence.
[3] **Blood-gouts**: drops of blood.
[4] **Ward**: defence.

Not truth, as diamond pure and hard,
Could be thy manly bosom's guard
On yon disastrous day!' —
She raised her eyes in mournful mood, —
Wilton himself before her stood!
It might have seemed his passing ghost,
For every youthful grace was lost,
And joy unwonted and surprise
Gave their strange wildness to his eyes. —
Expect not, noble dames and lords,
That I can tell such scene in words:
What skilful limner[1] e'er would choose
To paint the rainbow's varying hues,
Unless to mortal it were given
To dip his brush in dyes of heaven?
Far less can my weak line declare
Each changing passion's shade:
Brightening to rapture from despair,
Sorrow, surprise, and pity there,
And joy with her angelic air,
And hope that paints the future fair,
Their varying hues displayed;
Each o'er its rival's ground extending,
Alternate conquering, shifting, blending,
Till all fatigued the conflict yield,
And mighty love retains the field.
Shortly I tell what then he said,
By many a tender word delayed,
And modest blush, and bursting sigh,
And question kind, and fond reply: —

[1] **Limner**: a painter.

VI.

DE WILTON'S HISTORY.

'Forget we that disastrous day
When senseless in the lists I lay.
Thence dragged, — but how I cannot know,
For sense and recollection fled, —
I found me on a pallet[1] low
Within my ancient beadsman's[2] shed.
Austin, — remember'st thou, my Clare,
How thou didst blush when the old man,
When first our infant love began,
Said we would make a matchless pair? —
Menials and friends and kinsmen fled
From the degraded traitor's bed, —
He only held my burning head,
And tended me for many a day
While wounds and fever held their sway.
But far more needful was his care
When sense returned to wake despair;
For I did tear the closing wound,
And dash me frantic on the ground,
If e'er I heard the name of Clare.
At length, to calmer reason brought,
Much by his kind attendance wrought,
With him I left my native strand,
And, in a palmer's weeds arrayed,
My hated name and form to shade,
I journeyed many a land;
No more a lord of rank and birth,

[1] **Pallet**: a small, poor, rude bed.
[2] **Beadsman**: a person employed to pray for another.

But mingled with the dregs of earth.
Oft Austin for my reason feared,
When I would sit, and deeply brood
On dark revenge and deeds of blood,
Or wild mad schemes upreared.
My friend at length fell sick, and said
God would remove him soon;
And while upon his dying bed
He begged of me a boon —
If e'er my deadliest enemy
Beneath my brand should conquered lie,
Even then my mercy should awake
And spare his life for Austin's sake.

VII.

'Still restless as a second Cain,
To Scotland next my route was ta'en,
Full well the paths I knew.
Fame of my fate made various sound,
That death in pilgrimage I found,
That I had perished of my wound, —
None cared which tale was true;
And living eye could never guess
De Wilton in his palmer's dress,
For now that sable slough[1] is shed,
And trimmed my shaggy beard and head,
I scarcely know me in the glass.
A chance most wondrous did provide
That I should be that baron's guide —

[1] **Slough** (*sluf*): something slipped off, as the skin of a snake; here the coarse palmer's dress.

I will not name his name! —
Vengeance to God alone belongs;
But, when I think on all my wrongs,
My blood is liquid flame!
And ne'er the time shall I forget
When, in a Scottish hostel set,
Dark looks we did exchange:
What were his thoughts I cannot tell,
But in my bosom mustered Hell
Its plans of dark revenge.

VIII.

'A word of vulgar augury[1]
That broke from me, I scarce knew why,
Brought on a village tale,
Which wrought upon his moody sprite,[2]
And sent him armed forth by night.
I borrowed steed and mail
And weapons from his sleeping band;
And, passing from a postern[3] door,
We met and 'countered,[4] hand to hand, —
He fell on Gifford-moor.
For the death-stroke my brand I drew, —
Oh! then my helmed head he knew,
The palmer's cowl was gone, —

[1] **Word of vulgar augury**: referring to the palmer's reply to Marmion given on p. 103, line 217. "Vulgar augury" a common prediction or saying, alluding to the superstition that such a "death-peal" as Marmion fancied he heard portended "the death of a dear friend."

[2] **Sprite**: here spirit.

[3] **Postern**: a small rear (or side) door.

[4] **'Countered**: encountered.

Then had three inches of my blade
The heavy debt of vengeance paid, —
My hand the thought of Austin[1] stayed;
I left him there alone. —
O good old man! even from the grave
Thy spirit could thy master save:
If I had slain my foeman, ne'er
Had Whitby's abbess in her fear
Given to my hand this packet dear,
Of power to clear my injured fame
And vindicate De Wilton's name. —
Perchance you heard the abbess tell
Of the strange pageantry of hell
That broke our secret speech —
It rose from the infernal shade,
Or featly[2] was some juggle played,
A tale of peace to teach.
Appeal to Heaven I judged was best
When my name came among the rest.

IX.

'Now here within Tantallon hold
To Douglas late my tale I told,
To whom my house was known of old.
Won by my proofs, his falchion bright
This eve anew shall dub me knight.[3]
These were the arms that once did turn

[1] **Austin**: the beadsman (see p. 230).
[2] **Featly**: adroitly.
[3] **Dub me knight**: to confer the rank and title of knight by striking the candidate on the shoulder with the flat of the sword.

The tide of fight on Otterburne,[1]
And Harry Hotspur forced to yield
When the Dead Douglas won the field.
These Angus[2] gave — his armorer's care
Ere morn shall every breach repair;
For nought, he said, was in his halls
But ancient armor on the walls,
And aged chargers in the stalls,
And women, priests, and gray-haired men;
The rest were all in Twisel glen.[3]
And now I watch my armor here,
By law of arms,[4] till midnight's near;
Then, once again a belted knight,[5]
Seek Surrey's camp[6] with dawn of light.

X.

'There soon again we meet, my Clare!
This baron means to guide thee there:
Douglas reveres his king's command,
Else would he take thee from his band.

[1] **Otterburne**: this was a famous battle fought in 1388 between an invading force of Scottish troops, led by the Earls of Douglas and Murray, and an English force headed by the Percies, one of whom was Harry Hotspur. See Scott's *Border Minstrelsy*. The familiar ballad of *Chevy Chase* is founded, says Professor Child, on the battle of Otterburne, described in an older ballad.

[2] **Angus**: see Canto V., xiv., line 4.

[3] **Twisel glen**: this is in England not far from Flodden. "Here," says Scott, "James IV. encamped before taking post on Flodden."

[4] **By law of arms**: the law of arms required the candidate for knighthood to watch his armor the night before he was dubbed.

[5] **Belted knight**: the sword belt was one of the chief insignia of knighthood.

[6] **Surrey's camp**: the English forces, against whom James IV. was contending, were led by the Earl of Surrey.

And there thy kinsman Surrey, too,
Will give De Wilton justice due.
Now meeter far for martial broil,
Firmer my limbs and strung by toil,
Once more'—'O Wilton! must we then
Risk new-found happiness again,
Trust fate of arms once more?
And is there not an humble glen
Where we, content and poor,
Might build a cottage in the shade,
A shepherd thou, and I to aid
Thy task on dale and moor?—
That reddening brow!—too well I know
Not even thy Clare can peace bestow
While falsehood stains thy name:
Go then to fight! Clare bids thee go!
Clare can a warrior's feelings know
And weep a warrior's shame;
Can Red Earl Gilbert's[1] spirit feel,
Buckle the spurs upon thy heel
And belt thee with thy brand of steel,
And send thee forth to fame!'

XI.

That night upon the rocks and bay
The midnight moonbeam slumbering lay,
And poured its silver light and pure
Through loophole and through embrasure[2]

[1] **Red Earl Gilbert**: Lady Clare was a descendant of Red Earl Gilbert. See p. 228, line 128.

[2] **Embrasure**: the opening in a parapet or wall through which cannon are fired.

Upon Tantallon tower and hall;
But chief where arched windows wide
Illuminate the chapel's pride
The sober glances fall.
Much was there need; though seamed with scars,
Two veterans of the Douglas' wars,
Though two gray priests were there,
And each a blazing torch held high,
You could not by their blaze descry
The chapel's carving fair.
Amid that dim and smoky light,
Checkering the silvery moonshine bright,
A bishop[1] by the altar stood,
A noble lord of Douglas blood,
With mitre[2] sheen and rochet[3] white.
Yet showed his meek and thoughtful eye
But little pride of prelacy;
More pleased that in a barbarous age
He gave rude Scotland Virgil's page
Than that beneath his rule he held
The bishopric of fair Dunkeld.
Beside him ancient Angus stood,
Doffed his furred gown and sable hood;
O'er his huge form and visage pale
He wore a cap and shirt of mail,
And leaned his large and wrinkled hand

[1] **A bishop**: "this," says Scott, "was Gawain Douglas, son of Archibald Bell-the-Cat, Earl of Angus, though at this period he had not attained the mitre."

[2] **Mitre**: a tall, pointed, cleft cap worn by bishops and other high ecclesiastical dignitaries.

[3] **Rochet**: a short, upper garment with tight sleeves and open sides worn by bishops and other ecclesiastics.

Upon the huge and sweeping brand
Which wont of yore in battle fray
His foeman's limbs to shred[1] away,
As wood-knife lops the sapling spray.
He seemed as, from the tombs around
Rising at judgment-day,
Some giant Douglas may be found
In all his old array;
So pale his face, so huge his limb,
So old his arms, his look so grim.

XII.

Then at the altar Wilton kneels,
And Clare the spurs bound on his heels;
And think what next he must have felt
At buckling of the falchion belt!
And judge how Clara changed her hue
While fastening to her lover's side
A friend, which, though in danger tried,
He once had found untrue![2]
Then Douglas struck him with his blade:
'Saint Michael and Saint Andrew aid,
I dub thee knight.
Arise, Sir Ralph, De Wilton's heir!
For king, for church, for lady fair,
See that thou fight.'
And Bishop Gawain, as he rose,
Said: 'Wilton! grieve not for thy woes,

[1] **Shred**: to trim, or to cut into shreds.

[2] **Untrue**: alluding to the fact that in his contest with Marmion (see Canto V., xxi.) his sword had failed him.

Disgrace, and trouble;
For He who honor best bestows
May give thee double.'
De Wilton sobbed, for sob he must:
'Where'er I meet a Douglas, trust
That Douglas is my brother!'
'Nay, nay,' old Angus said, 'not so;
To Surrey's camp thou now must go,
Thy wrongs no longer smother.
I have two sons in yonder field;
And, if thou meet'st them under shield,
Upon them bravely — do thy worst,
And foul fall him[1] that blenches[2] first!'

XIII.

Not far advanced was morning day
When Marmion did his troop array
To Surrey's camp to ride;
He had safe-conduct[3] for his band
Beneath the royal seal and hand,
And Douglas gave a guide.
The ancient earl with stately grace
Would Clara on her palfrey place,
And whispered in an undertone,
'Let the hawk stoop, his prey is flown.'
The train[4] from out the castle drew,
But Marmion stopped to bid adieu:

[1] **Foul fall him**: evil befall him.
[2] **Blenches**: shrinks, starts back.
[3] **Safe-conduct**: a written pass giving one safe passage through a hostile country.
[4] **Train**: band of troops.

'Though something I might plain,'[1] he said,
'Of cold respect to stranger guest,
Sent hither by your king's behest,
While in Tantallon's towers I stayed,
Part we in friendship from your land,
And, noble earl, receive my hand.' —
But Douglas round him drew his cloak,
Folded his arms, and thus he spoke: —
'My manors,[2] halls, and bowers shall still
Be open at my sovereign's will
To each one whom he lists, howe'er
Unmeet[3] to be the owner's peer.[4]
My castles are my king's alone,
From turret to foundation-stone —
The hand of Douglas is his own,
And never shall in friendly grasp
The hand of such as Marmion clasp.'

XIV.

Burned Marmion's swarthy cheek like fire
And shook his very frame for ire,
And — 'This to me!' he said,
'An 'twere not for thy hoary beard,
Such hand as Marmion's had not spared
To cleave the Douglas' head!
And first I tell thee, haughty peer,
He who does England's message here,
Although the meanest in her state,

[1] **Plain**: complain.

[2] **Manors**: a manor was originally a mansion, a dwelling (compare Latin *manere*, French *manoir*, to remain or dwell); generally, the estates of a person of rank.

[3] **Unmeet**: unfit.

[4] **Peer** (from Latin *par*, equal): equal; one of the same rank.

May well, proud Angus, be thy mate;
And, Douglas, more I tell thee here,
Even in thy pitch of pride,[1]
Here in thy hold, thy vassals near, —
Nay, never look upon your lord,
And lay your hands upon your sword,[2] —
I tell thee, thou'rt defied!
And if thou saidst I am not peer
To any lord in Scotland here,
Lowland or Highland, far or near,
Lord Angus, thou hast lied!'
On the earl's cheek the flush of rage
O'ercame the ashen hue of age:
Fierce he broke forth, — 'And darest thou then
To beard the lion in his den,
The Douglas in his hall?
And hopest thou hence unscathed[3] to go? —
No, by Saint Bride[4] of Bothwell, no!
Up drawbridge, grooms — what, warder, ho!
Let the portcullis fall.' —
Lord Marmion turned, — well was his need, —
And dashed the rowels[5] in his steed,
Like arrow through the archway sprung,

[1] **Pitch of pride**: this expression may mean height of pride or haughty power; (*e.g.* "Boniface the Third, in whom was the *pitch* of pride, and height of aspiring haughtiness" — Fuller) or it may be used for the castle itself.

[2] **Your sword**: this is addressed to the vassals of Douglas.

[3] **Unscathed**: unharmed.

[4] **Saint Bride**: St. Bridget of Ireland. In Scotland and England, where many churches were dedicated to her, she was commonly known as St. Bride. There is a church of St. Bride at Bothwell on the Clyde, near Glasgow.

[5] **Rowels**: the little wheels of spurs, armed with sharp points.

The ponderous grate behind him rung;
To pass there was such scanty room,
The bars descending razed[1] his plume.

XV.

The steed along the drawbridge flies
Just as it trembled on the rise;
Not lighter does the swallow skim
Along the smooth lake's level brim:
And when Lord Marmion reached his band,
He halts, and turns with clenched hand,
And shout of loud defiance pours,
And shook his gauntlet[2] at the towers.
'Horse! horse!' the Douglas cried, 'and chase!'
But soon he reined his fury's pace:
'A royal messenger he came,
Though most unworthy of the name. —
A letter forged! Saint Jude to speed![3]
Did ever knight so foul a deed?
At first in heart it liked me[4] ill
When the king praised his clerkly skill.
Thanks to Saint Bothan, son of mine,
Save Gawain, ne'er could pen a line;
So swore I, and I swear it still,
Let my boy-bishop fret his fill. —
Saint Mary mend my fiery mood!
Old age ne'er cools the Douglas blood,

[1] **Razed**: grazed.
[2] **Gauntlet**: an iron glove such as was worn by knights when fully armed.
[3] **Saint Jude to speed**: St. Jude protect me.
[4] **Liked me**: I liked.

I thought to slay him where he stood.
'Tis pity of him too,' he cried:
'Bold can he speak and fairly ride,
I warrant him a warrior tried.'
With this his mandate he recalls,
And slowly seeks his castle halls.

XVI.

The day in Marmion's journey wore;
Yet, ere his passion's gust was o'er,
They crossed the heights of Stanrig-moor.[1]
His troop more closely there he scanned,
And missed the Palmer from the band.
'Palmer or not,' young Blount did say,
'He parted at the peep of day;
Good sooth, it was in strange array.'
'In what array?' said Marmion quick.
'My lord, I ill can spell[2] the trick;
But all night long with clink and bang
Close to my couch did hammers clang;
At dawn the falling drawbridge rang,
And from a loophole while I peep,
Old Bell-the-Cat came from the keep,
Wrapped in a gown of sables fair,
As fearful of the morning air;
Beneath, when that was blown aside,
A rusty shirt of mail I spied,
By Archibald won in bloody work
Against the Saracen[3] and Turk:

[1] **Stanrig-moor**: south of Tantallon Castle.
[2] **Spell**: make out, understand.
[3] **Saracen**: an Arab or Mohammedan, especially a Mohammedan hostile to the crusaders.

Last night it hung not in the hall;
I thought some marvel would befall.
And next I saw them saddled lead
Old Cheviot forth, the earl's best steed,
A matchless horse, though something old,
Prompt in his paces, cool and bold.
I heard the Sheriff Sholto say
The earl did much the Master[1] pray
To use him on the battle-day;
But he preferred' — 'Nay, Henry,[2] cease!
Thou sworn horse-courser,[3] hold thy peace. —
Eustace, thou bear'st a brain[4] — I pray,
What did Blount see at break of day?' —

XVII.

'In brief, my lord, we both descried —
For then I stood by Henry's side —
The Palmer mount and outwards ride
Upon the earl's own favorite steed.
All sheathed he was in armor bright,
And much resembled that same knight
Subdued by you in Cotswold fight;
Lord Angus wished him speed.' —
The instant that Fitz-Eustace spoke,
A sudden light on Marmion broke: —
'Ah! dastard[5] fool, to reason lost!'
He muttered; ''Twas nor fay nor ghost

[1] **The Master**: his eldest son, the Master of Angus.
[2] **Henry**: Henry Blount.
[3] **Horse-courser**: one who runs or keeps race-horses.
[4] **Bear'st a brain**: hast a head on thy shoulders.
[5] **Dastard**: coward.

I met upon the moonlight wold,
But living man of earthly mould. —
O dotage blind and gross!
Had I but fought as wont, one thrust
Had laid De Wilton in the dust,
My path no more to cross. —
How stand we now? — he told his tale
To Douglas, and with some avail;
'Twas therefore gloomed[1] his rugged brow. —
Will Surrey dare to entertain
'Gainst Marmion charge disproved and vain?
Small risk of that, I trow.
Yet Clare's sharp questions must I shun,
Must separate Constance from the nun —
Oh! what a tangled web we weave
When first we practise[2] to deceive!
A Palmer too! — no wonder why
I felt rebuked beneath his eye;
I might have known there was but one
Whose look could quell Lord Marmion.'

XVIII.

Stung with these thoughts, he urged to speed
His troop, and reached at eve the Tweed,
When Lennel's convent[3] closed their march. —
There now is left but one frail arch,
Yet mourn thou not its cells;
Our time a fair exchange has made:

[1] **Gloomed**: darkened or frowned.
[2] **Practise**: scheme or plot.
[3] **Lennel's convent**: a convent very near Flodden Field.

Hard by, in hospitable shade,
A reverend pilgrim[1] dwells,
Well worth the whole Bernardine[2] brood
That e'er wore sandal, frock, or hood. —
Yet did Saint Bernard's abbot there
Give Marmion entertainment fair,
And lodging for his train and Clare.
Next morn the baron climbed the tower,
To view afar the Scottish power,
Encamped on Flodden edge;[3]
The white pavilions made a show
Like remnants of the winter snow
Along the dusky ridge.
Long Marmion looked: — at length his eye
Unusual movement might descry
Amid the shifting lines;
The Scottish host drawn out appears,
For, flashing on the hedge of spears,
The eastern sunbeam shines.
Their front now deepening, now extending,
Their flank inclining, wheeling, bending,
Now drawing back, and now descending,
The skilful Marmion well could know
They watched the motions of some foe
Who traversed on the plain below.

XIX.

Even so it was. From Flodden ridge
The Scots beheld the English host

[1] **Pilgrim**: Patrick Brydone, Esq., who at that time lived in Lennel's House.

[2] **Bernardine**: pertaining to St. Bernard's order, the Cistercians.

[3] **Flodden edge**: Flodden hill.

Leave Barmore-wood,[1] their evening post,
And heedful watched them as they crossed
The Till by Twisel Bridge.[2]
High sight it is and haughty, while
They dive into the deep defile;
Beneath the caverned cliff they fall,
Beneath the castle's airy wall.
By rock, by oak, by hawthorn-tree
Troop after troop are disappearing;
Troop after troop their banners rearing
Upon the eastern bank you see;
Still pouring down the rocky den
Where flows the sullen Till,
And rising from the dim-wood glen,
Standards on standards, men on men,
In slow succession still,
And sweeping o'er the Gothic arch,
And pressing on, in ceaseless march,
To gain the opposing hill.
That morn, to many a trumpet clang,
Twisel! thy rock's deep echo rang;
And many a chief of birth and rank,
Saint Helen![3] at thy fountain drank.
Thy hawthorn glade, which now we see
In spring-tide bloom so lavishly,

[1] **Barmore-wood**: it is not far from Flodden, on the east of the Till. Flodden is on the opposite side.

[2] **Twisel Bridge**: the ancient bridge of Twisel, by which the English crossed the Till, is still standing, says Scott, beneath Twisel Castle, a splendid pile of Gothic architecture, as now rebuilt by Sir Francis Blake.

[3] **Saint Helen**: beneath a tall rock near the bridge, says Scott, is a plentiful fountain called St. Helen's Well.

Had then from many an axe its doom,
To give the marching columns room.

XX.

And why stands Scotland idly now,
Dark Flodden! on thy airy brow,
Since England gains the pass the while,
And struggles through the deep defile?
What checks the fiery soul of James?
Why sits that champion of the dames
Inactive on his steed,
And sees, between him and his land,
Between him and Tweed's southern strand,
His host Lord Surrey lead?
What vails[1] the vain knight-errant's brand? —
O Douglas, for thy leading wand!
Fierce Randolph, for thy speed!
Oh! for one hour of Wallace wight,
Or well-skilled Bruce, to rule the fight
And cry, 'Saint Andrew[2] and our right!'
Another sight had seen that morn,
From Fate's dark book a leaf been torn,
And Flodden had been Bannockbourne![3] —
The precious hour has passed in vain,
And England's host has gained the plain,

[1] **Vails**: this has usually been thought to be a contraction of avails, but Rolfe understands it to mean "lowers" in sense of "keeps idle."

[2] **Saint Andrew**: the patron saint of Scotland.

[3] **Bannockbourne**: Bannockburn, a town of Scotland near Stirling on the Bannock, an affluent of the Forth. Here, in 1314, the Scots gained a great victory over the English, and Bruce taught Edward II. that Scottish footmen, skilfully handled, could defeat the boasted cavalry which England had thought invincible.

Wheeling their march and circling still
Around the base of Flodden hill.

XXI.

Ere yet the bands met Marmion's eye,
Fitz-Eustace shouted loud and high,
'Hark! hark! my lord, an English drum!
And see ascending squadrons come
Between Tweed's river and the hill,
Foot, horse, and cannon! Hap what hap,[1]
My basnet[2] to a prentice cap,
Lord Surrey's o'er the Till! —
Yet more! yet more! — how fair arrayed
They file from out the hawthorn shade,
And sweep so gallant by!
With all their banners bravely spread,
And all their armor flashing high,
Saint George might waken from the dead,
To see fair England's standards fly.' —
'Stint in thy prate,'[3] quoth Blount, 'thou'dst best,
And listen to our lord's behest.' —
With kindling brow Lord Marmion said,
'This instant be our band arrayed;
The river must be quickly crossed,
That we may join Lord Surrey's host.
If fight King James, — as well I trust

[1] **Hap what hap**: happen what may.

[2] **Basnet**: a steel cap having, at this period, a visor for covering the face. It was much lighter than the older-fashioned helmet. I'll wager my helmet against an apprentice's cap. Apprentices formerly wore a peculiar cap to mark their condition.

[3] **Stint in thy prate**: hold your tongue.

That fight he will, and fight he must, —
The Lady Clare behind our lines
Shall tarry while the battle joins.'[1]

XXII.

Himself he swift on horseback threw,
Scarce to the abbot[2] bade adieu,
Far less would listen to his prayer
To leave behind the helpless Clare.
Down to the Tweed his band he drew,
And muttered as the flood they view,
'The pheasant in the falcon's claw,
He scarce will yield to please a daw;[3]
Lord Angus may the abbot awe,[4]
So Clare shall bide with me.'
Then on that dangerous ford and deep
Where to the Tweed Leat's eddies[5] creep
He ventured desperately:
And not a moment will he bide
Till squire or groom before him ride;
Headmost of all he stems the tide,
And stems it gallantly.

[1] **Battle joins**: the fight goes on.

[2] **Abbot**: the abbot of Lennel convent. See stanza xviii.

[3] **Daw**: the jackdaw, a bird of the crow family, frequents church steeples. Its constant chattering has gained for it the reputation of being a foolish bird. Marmion, comparing himself to the fierce falcon, declares that he will not give up the Lady Clare to please any chattering daw-like priest or abbot.

[4] **Awe**: the meaning appears to be, Lord Angus may (might) awe or frighten the abbot into giving up the Lady Clare, therefore she "shall bide with me."

[5] **Leat's eddies**: the Leat is a small stream flowing into the Tweed.

Eustace held Clare upon her horse,
Old Hubert led her rein,
Stoutly they braved the current's course,
And, though far downward driven perforce,
The southern bank they gain.
Behind them straggling came to shore,
As best they might, the train:
Each o'er his head his yew-bow[1] bore,
A caution not in vain;
Deep need that day that every string,
By wet unharmed, should sharply ring.
A moment then Lord Marmion stayed,
And breathed his steed,[2] his men arrayed,
Then forward moved his band,
Until, Lord Surrey's rear-guard won,
He halted by a cross of stone,
That on a hillock standing lone
Did all the field command.

XXIII.

Hence might they see the full array
Of either host for deadly fray;
Their marshalled lines[3] stretched east and west,
And fronted north and south,
And distant salutation passed
From the loud cannon mouth,
Not in the close successive rattle

[1] **Yew-bow**: the yew was thought to make the toughest and best bows. Each archer in fording the stream held his bow high above his head to prevent the string from being harmed by wet.

[2] **Breathed his steed**: gave his steed an opportunity to recover breath.

[3] **Marshalled lines**: lines of men drawn up in order of battle.

That breathes the voice of modern battle,
But slow and far between.
The hillock gained, Lord Marmion stayed:
'Here, by this cross,' he gently said,
'You well may view the scene.
Here shalt thou tarry, lovely Clare:
Oh! think of Marmion in thy prayer! —
Thou wilt not? — well, no less my care
Shall, watchful, for thy weal prepare. —
You, Blount and Eustace, are her guard,
With ten picked archers of my train;
With England if the day go hard,
To Berwick speed amain. —
But if we conquer, cruel maid,
My spoils shall at your feet be laid,
When here we meet again.'
He waited not for answer there,
And would not mark the maid's despair,
Nor heed the discontented look
From either squire, but spurred amain,
And, dashing through the battle-plain,
His way to Surrey took.

XXIV.

'The good Lord Marmion, by my life!
Welcome to danger's hour! —
Short greeting serves in time of strife. —
Thus have I ranged my power:
Myself will rule this central host,
Stout[1] Stanley fronts their right,

[1] **Stout**: valiant.

My sons command the vaward[1] post,
With Brian Tunstall,[2] stainless knight;
Lord Dacre, with his horsemen light,
Shall be in rearward of the fight,
And succor those that need it most.
Now, gallant Marmion, well I know,
Would gladly to the vanguard[3] go;
Edmund,[4] the Admiral,[5] Tunstall there,
With thee their charge will blithely share;
There fight thine own retainers too
Beneath De Burg, thy steward true.'
'Thanks, noble Surrey!' Marmion said,
Nor further greeting there he paid,
But, parting like a thunderbolt,
First in the vanguard made a halt,
Where such a shout there rose
Of 'Marmion! Marmion!' that the cry,
Up Flodden mountain shrilling high,
Startled the Scottish foes.

XXV.

Blount and Fitz-Eustace rested still
With Lady Clare upon the hill,

[1] **Vaward**: vanguard or advance force.

[2] **Tunstall**: Sir Brian Tunstall, says Scott, was one of the few Englishmen of rank slain at Flodden. He, perhaps, derived his epithet of "stainless" from his white armor and banner.

[3] **Vanguard**: advance guard.

[4] **Edmund**: Sir Edmund Howard, the knight marshal of the army.

[5] **The Admiral**: Thomas Howard, the admiral of England. He and Edmund were sons of the Earl of Surrey. They commanded divisions on the right wing of the English forces. Surrey commanded the centre; Sir Edward Stanley the left wing, and Lord Dacre with a large body of cavalry formed a reserve.

On which — for far the day was spent —
The western sunbeams now were bent;
The cry they heard, its meaning knew,
Could plain their distant comrades view:
Sadly to Blount did Eustace say,
'Unworthy office here to stay!
No hope of gilded spurs[1] to-day. —
But see! look up — on Flodden bent[2]
The Scottish foe has fired his tent.'[3]
And sudden, as he spoke,
From the sharp ridges of the hill,
All downward to the banks of Till,
Was wreathed in sable smoke,
Volumed and vast, and rolling far,
The cloud enveloped Scotland's war
As down the hill they broke;
Nor martial shout, nor minstrel tone,
Announced their march; their tread alone,
At times one warning trumpet blown,
At times a stifled hum,
Told England, from his mountain-throne
King James did rushing come.
Scarce could they hear or see their foes
Until at weapon-point they close. —
They close in clouds of smoke and dust,
With sword-sway and with lance's thrust;
And such a yell was there,

[1] **Gilded spurs**: "no hope of gilded spurs,"— no hope of our winning the honor of knighthood (of which the gilded spurs were the badge), if we stay here at a distance from the battle. [2] **Bent**: see note on "Bent," p. 50.

[3] **Fired his tent**: apparently to show that there was to be no retreat — it was to be victory or death.

Of sudden and portentous birth,
As if men fought upon the earth,
And fiends in upper air;
Oh! life and death were in the shout,
Recoil and rally, charge and rout,
And triumph and despair.
Long looked the anxious squires; their eye
Could in the darkness nought descry.

XXVI.

At length the freshening western blast
Aside the shroud of battle cast;
And first the ridge of mingled spears
Above the brightening cloud appears,
And in the smoke the pennons flew,
As in the storm the white seamew.
Then marked they, dashing broad and far,
The broken billows of the war,
And plumed crests of chieftains brave
Floating like foam upon the wave;
But nought distinct they see:
Wide raged the battle on the plain;
Spears shook and falchions flashed amain;
Fell England's arrow-flight like rain;
Crests rose, and stooped, and rose again,
Wild and disorderly.
Amid the scene of tumult, high
They saw Lord Marmion's falcon[1] fly;
And stainless Tunstall's banner white,
And Edmund Howard's lion bright,[2]

[1] **Falcon**: the falcon represented on his banner.
[2] **Lion bright**: on Howard's banner.

Still bare them bravely in the fight,
Although against them come
Of gallant Gordons many a one,
And many a stubborn Badenoch-man,[1]
And many a rugged Border clan,
With Huntly and with Home.

XXVII.

Far on the left, unseen the while,
Stanley broke[2] Lennox and Argyle,
Though there the western mountaineer
Rushed with bare bosom on the spear,
And flung the feeble targe aside,
And with both hands the broadsword plied.
'Twas vain. — But Fortune, on the right,
With fickle smile cheered Scotland's fight.
Then fell that spotless banner white,
The Howard's lion fell;
Yet still Lord Marmion's falcon flew
With wavering flight, while fiercer grew
Around the battle-yell.
The Border slogan rent the sky!
A Home! a Gordon! was the cry:
Loud were the clanging blows;
Advanced, — forced back, — now low, now high,
The pennon sunk and rose;
As bends the bark's mast in the gale,
When rent are rigging, shrouds, and sail,

[1] **Badenoch-man**: a man from the district of Badenoch in the Highlands of Scotland.

[2] **Stanley broke**: broke the lines of the Scottish forces led by Lennox and Argyle.

It wavered mid the foes.
No longer Blount the view could bear:
'By heaven and all its saints! I swear
I will not see it lost!
Fitz-Eustace, you with Lady Clare
May bid your beads[1] and patter[2] prayer,—
I gallop to the host.'
And to the fray he rode amain,
Followed by all the archer train.
The fiery youth, with desperate charge,
Made for a space an opening large,—
The rescued banner rose,—
But darkly closed the war around,
Like pine-tree rooted from the ground
It sank among the foes.
Then Eustace mounted too,—yet stayed,
As loath to leave the helpless maid,
When, fast as shaft can fly,
Bloodshot his eyes, his nostrils spread,
The loose rein dangling from his head,
Housing and saddle bloody red,
Lord Marmion's steed rushed by;
And Eustace, maddening at the sight,
A look and sign to Clara cast
To mark he would return in haste,
Then plunged into the fight.

XXVIII.

Ask me not what the maiden feels,
Left in that dreadful hour alone:

[1] **Bid your beads**: say a prayer for each bead of the chaplet or rosary.
[2] **Patter**: mumble hurriedly.

Perchance her reason stoops or reels;
Perchance a courage, not her own,
Braces her mind to desperate tone.—
The scattered van[1] of England wheels;—
She only said, as loud in air
The tumult roared, 'Is Wilton there?'—
They fly, or, maddened by despair,
Fight but to die,—'Is Wilton there?'
With that, straight up the hill there rode
Two horsemen drenched with gore,
And in their arms, a helpless load,
A wounded knight they bore.
His hand still strained the broken brand;
His arms were smeared with blood and sand.
Dragged from among the horses' feet,
With dinted shield and helmet beat,
The falcon crest and plumage gone,
Can that be haughty Marmion! . . .
Young Blount his armor did unlace,
And, gazing on his ghastly face,
Said, 'By Saint George, he's gone!
That spear-wound has our master sped,[2]
And see the deep cut on his head!
Good-night to Marmion.'—
'Unnurtured[3] Blount! thy brawling cease:
He opes his eyes,' said Eustace; 'peace!'

XXIX.

When, doffed his casque, he felt free air,
Around gan Marmion wildly stare:

[1] **Van**: advance forces. [2] **Sped**: dispatched, killed.
[3] **Unnurtured**: ill-bred, rude, ignorant.

'Where's Harry Blount? Fitz-Eustace where?
Linger ye here, ye hearts of hare!
Redeem my pennon, — charge again!
Cry, "Marmion to the rescue!" — Vain!
Last of my race, on battle-plain
That shout shall ne'er be heard again! —
Yet my last thought is England's — fly,
To Dacre bear my signet-ring;[1]
Tell him his squadrons[2] up to bring. —
Fitz-Eustace, to Lord Surrey hie:
Tunstall lies dead upon the field,
His lifeblood stains the spotless shield;
Edmund is down; my life is reft;[3]
The Admiral alone is left.
Let Stanley charge with spur of fire, —
With Chester charge, and Lancashire,
Full upon Scotland's central host,
Or victory and England's lost. —
Must I bid twice? — hence, varlets![4] fly! —
Leave Marmion here alone — to die.'
They parted, and alone he lay;
Clare drew her from the sight away,
Till pain wrung forth a lowly moan,
And half he murmured, 'Is there none
Of all my halls have nurst,
Page, squire, or groom, one cup to bring

[1] **Signet-ring**: a ring containing a signet or private seal; the ring would prove to Lord Dacre that Marmion, himself, sent the order.
[2] **Squadrons**: divisions or bodies of troops.
[3] **Reft**: taken, torn away by violence.
[4] **Varlets**: (from *vaslets*, a diminutive of vassals,) followers; but here the word appears to be used angrily in the sense of rascals.

Of blessed water from the spring,
To slake my dying thirst!'

XXX.

O Woman! in our hours of ease
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
And variable as the shade
By the light quivering aspen made;
When pain and anguish wring the brow,
A ministering angel thou!—
Scarce were the piteous accents said,
When with the baron's casque the maid
To the nigh streamlet ran:
Forgot were hatred, wrongs, and fears;
The plaintive voice alone she hears,
Sees but the dying man.
She stooped her by the runnel's[1] side,
But in abhorrence backward drew;
For, oozing from the mountain's side
Where raged the war, a dark-red tide
Was curdling in the streamlet blue.
Where shall she turn?—behold her mark
A little fountain cell,
Where water, clear as diamond-spark,
In a stone basin fell.
Above, some half-worn letters say,
Drink. weary. pilgrim. drink. and. pray.
For. the. kind. soul. of. Sibyl. Grey.
Who. built. this. cross. and. well.
She filled the helm and back she hied,

[1] **Runnel**: a rivulet.

And with surprise and joy espied
A monk supporting Marmion's head;
A pious man, whom duty brought
To dubious verge of battle fought,
To shrive the dying, bless the dead.

XXXI.

Deep drank Lord Marmion of the wave,
And, as she stooped his brow to lave —
'Is it the hand of Clare,' he said,
'Or injured Constance, bathes my head?'
Then, as remembrance rose, —
'Speak not to me of shrift[1] or prayer!
I must redress her woes.
Short space, few words, are mine to spare;
Forgive and listen, gentle Clare!' —
'Alas!' she said, 'the while, —
Oh! think of your immortal weal!
In vain for Constance is your zeal;
She — died at Holy Isle.' —
Lord Marmion started from the ground
As light as if he felt no wound,
Though in the action burst the tide
In torrents from his wounded side.
'Then it was truth,' he said — 'I knew
That the dark presage[2] must be true. —
I would the Fiend, to whom belongs
The vengeance due to all her wrongs,

[1] **Shrift**: confession made to a priest, and pardon granted by him in consequence of the confession.
[2] **Presage**: foreboding.

Would spare me but a day!
For wasting fire, and dying groan,
And priests slain on the altar stone,
Might bribe him for delay.
It may not be! — this dizzy trance —
Curse on yon base marauder's lance,
And doubly cursed my failing brand!
A sinful heart makes feeble hand.'
Then fainting down on earth he sunk,
Supported by the trembling monk.

XXXII.

With fruitless labor Clara bound
And strove to stanch the gushing wound;
The monk with unavailing cares
Exhausted all the Church's prayers.
Ever, he said, that, close and near,
A lady's voice[1] was in his ear,
And that the priest he could not hear;
For that she ever sung,
'*In the lost battle,*[2] *borne down by the flying,*
Where mingles war's rattle with groans of the dying!'
So the notes rung. —
'Avoid thee,[3] Fiend! — with cruel hand
Shake not the dying sinner's sand![4] —
Oh! look, my son, upon yon sign[5]

[1] **A lady's voice**: the voice of Constance.
[2] **In the lost battle**: the song of Constance. See Canto III., line 170.
[3] **Avoid thee**: away with thee, depart.
[4] **Sand**: alluding to shaking an hour-glass in order to hasten the running out of the sand; hence, to shake "the dying sinner's sand" is to hasten his death and his departure to perdition.
[5] **Sign**: the crucifix.

Of the Redeemer's grace divine;
Oh! think on faith and bliss!—
By many a death-bed I have been,
And many a sinner's parting seen,
But never aught like this.'—
The war, that for a space did fail,
Now trebly thundering swelled the gale,
And 'Stanley!' was the cry.—
A light on Marmion's visage spread,
And fired his glazing eye;
With dying hand above his head
He shook the fragment of his blade,
And shouted 'Victory!—
Charge, Chester, charge! On, Stanley, on!'
Were the last words of Marmion.

XXXIII.

By this, though deep the evening fell,
Still rose the battle's deadly swell,
For still the Scots around their king,
Unbroken, fought in desperate ring.
Where's now their victor vaward wing,
Where Huntly, and where Home?—
Oh! for a blast of that dread horn,[1]

[1] **That dread horn**: the magic horn of Roland, a nephew of Charlemagne. In 778, when Charlemagne was returning from Spain to France, the rear of his army, under the command of Roland, was attacked in the passes of the Pyrenees by the Basques or Gascons — a people of that region — and was entirely cut to pieces. Roland might have brought Charlemagne to his help by a blast of his horn, but did not use it until too late. The *Song of Roland* was known throughout Europe during the Middle Ages.

On Fontarabian[1] echoes borne,
That to King Charles did come,
When Rowland brave, and Olivier,[2]
And every paladin[3] and peer,
On Roncesvalles[4] died!
Such blasts might warn them, not in vain,
To quit the plunder of the slain
And turn the doubtful day again,
While yet on Flodden side
Afar the Royal Standard[5] flies,
And round it toils and bleeds and dies
Our Caledonian[6] pride!
In vain the wish — for far away,
While spoil and havoc mark their way,
Near Sibyl's Cross the plunderers stray. —
'O lady,' cried the monk, 'away!'
And placed her on her steed,
And led her to the chapel fair
Of Tilmouth upon Tweed.

[1] **Fontarabian**: Fontarabia, a Spanish frontier town near the foot of the Pyrenees.

[2] **Rowland** and **Olivier**: Rowland is another form for Roland; Olivier or Oliver was a brother knight of equal celebrity. The proverb "A Rowland for an Oliver," that is, to give as good as one gets, referred originally to the two French warriors.

[3] **Paladin**: (from Latin *Palatium*, palace) knight, a warrior, originally one of the officers of the imperial palace of Charlemagne.

[4] **Roncesvalles**: a gorge of the Pyrenees, province of Navarre, Spain. It was in the gorge of Roncesvalles that the rear of Charlemagne's army was destroyed.

[5] **Royal Standard**: the royal banner of England having the royal arms — then the three leopards — to which the lion rampant of Scotland and the harp of Ireland were added by James I. The Royal Standard marks the presence of the sovereign or his representative.

[6] **Caledonian**: Scottish.

There all the night they spent in prayer,
And at the dawn of morning there
She met her kinsman, Lord Fitz-Clare.

XXXIV.

But as they left the darkening heath
More desperate grew the strife of death.
The English shafts in volleys hailed,
In headlong charge their horse assailed;
Front, flank, and rear, the squadrons sweep
To break the Scottish circle deep
That fought around their king.
But yet, though thick the shafts as snow,
Though charging knights like whirlwinds go,
Though billmen[1] ply the ghastly blow,
Unbroken was the ring;
The stubborn spearmen still made good
Their dark impenetrable wood,[2]
Each stepping where his comrade stood
The instant that he fell.
No thought was there of dastard flight;
Linked in the serried[3] phalanx[4] tight,
Groom fought like noble, squire like knight,

[1] **Billmen**: men armed with bills, that is, with weapons combining the axe and spear.

[2] **Impenetrable wood**: the thousands of spears are here represented as forming a forest of weapons, at once dark and impenetrable to the attacking party.

[3] **Serried**: crowded, compact.

[4] **Phalanx**: a body of troops drawn up in close order; originally a body of Macedonian troops drawn up so that their shields joined and their spears overlapped one another, presenting a firm, compact front to the enemy.

As fearlessly and well,
Till utter darkness closed her wing
O'er their thin host and wounded king.
Then skilful Surrey's sage commands
Led back from strife his shattered bands;
And from the charge they drew,
As mountain-waves from wasted lands
Sweep back to ocean blue.
Then did their loss his foemen know;
Their king, their lords, their mightiest low,
They melted from the field, as snow,
When streams are swoln and south winds blow,
Dissolves in silent dew.
Tweed's echoes heard the ceaseless plash,
While many a broken band
Disordered through her currents dash,
To gain the Scottish land;
To town and tower, to down and dale,
To tell red Flodden's dismal tale,
And raise the universal wail.
Tradition, legend, tune, and song
Shall many an age that wail prolong;
Still from the sire the son shall hear
Of the stern strife and carnage drear
Of Flodden's fatal field,
Where shivered was fair Scotland's spear
And broken was her shield!

XXXV.

Day dawns upon the mountain's side. —
There, Scotland! lay thy bravest pride,

Chiefs, knights, and nobles, many a one;
The sad survivors all are gone. —
View not that corpse mistrustfully,
Defaced and mangled though it be;
Nor to yon Border castle high
Look northward with upbraiding eye;
  Nor cherish hope in vain
That, journeying far on foreign strand,
The Royal Pilgrim to his land
  May yet return again.
He saw the wreck his rashness wrought;
Reckless of life, he desperate fought,
  And fell on Flodden plain: [1]
And well in death his trusty brand,
Firm clenched within his manly hand,
  Beseemed the monarch slain.
But oh! how changed since yon blithe night! [2] —
Gladly I turn me from the sight
  Unto my tale again.

XXXVI.

Short is my tale: — Fitz-Eustace' care
A pierced and mangled body bare
To moated [3] Lichfield's lofty pile; [4]

[1] **Fell on Flodden plain**: there can be no doubt, says Scott, that King James fell in the battle of Flodden. He was killed within a lance's length of the Earl of Surrey. An unhewn column marks the spot where James fell, still called the King's Stone. [2] **Blithe night**: see Canto V., line 171.

[3] **Moated**: Lichfield Cathedral (Staffordshire) was surrounded at one time by strong walls and a moat, or broad, deep trench. The city itself, though it had no wall, formerly had a moat; hence this word "moated" may here refer either to the city or the cathedral.

[4] **Lichfield's lofty pile**: this is one of the most beautiful cathedrals in

And there, beneath the southern aisle,
A tomb with Gothic sculpture fair
Did long Lord Marmion's image bear. —
Now vainly for its site you look;
'Twas levelled when fanatic Brook [1]
The fair cathedral stormed and took,
But, thanks to Heaven and good Saint Chad,[2]
A guerdon [3] meet the spoiler had! —
There erst was martial Marmion found,
His feet upon a couchant [4] hound,
His hands to heaven upraised;
And all around, on scutcheon [5] rich,
And tablet carved, and fretted niche,
His arms and feats were blazed.[6]
And yet, though all was carved so fair,
And priest for Marmion breathed the prayer,
The last Lord Marmion lay not there.
From Ettrick woods a peasant swain

England and is surmounted by three lofty spires. The greater part of the existing edifice dates from about 1250; the chief portions are of early English architecture.

[1] **Brook**: in the English Revolution of 1643, Lichfield Cathedral was garrisoned for the king. Lord Brook, who had vowed the destruction of every cathedral in England, attacked it with a body of Puritan troops, who eventually compelled its surrender. The victorious party turned the church into a prison, and wantonly destroyed much of the interior.

[2] **Saint Chad**: a religious hermit who lived in the seventh century near Lichfield. He founded the cathedral, and his statue still stands over the main entrance.

[3] **Guerdon**: recompense, reward; here used ironically, since Brook was killed in his attack on the cathedral (St. Chad's Church), and he received his death-wound on St. Chad's day.

[4] **Couchant**: in an attitude of repose. The effigy or sculptured figure of Marmion on his tomb rests with the feet upon a couchant hound.

[5] **Scutcheon**: escutcheon, a shield bearing a coat-of-arms.

[6] **Blazed**: emblazoned, represented.

Followed his lord to Flodden plain, —
One of those flowers whom plaintive lay
In Scotland mourns as 'wede away': [1]
Sore wounded, Sibyl's Cross he spied,
And dragged him to its foot, and died
Close by the noble Marmion's side.
The spoilers stripped and gashed the slain,
And thus their corpses were mista'en;
And thus in the proud baron's tomb
The lowly woodsman took the room.

XXXVII.

Less easy task it were to show
Lord Marmion's nameless grave and low.
They dug his grave e'en where he lay,
But every mark is gone:
Time's wasting hand has done away
The simple Cross of Sibyl Grey,
And broke her font [2] of stone;
But yet from out the little hill
Oozes the slender springlet [3] still.
Oft halts the stranger there,

[1] **Wede away**: destroyed. The words are quoted from Jane Elliot's song of *The Flowers of the Forest*, and refer to the peasant lads of Ettrick Forest.

"The Flowers of the Forest, that fought, aye the foremost,
The prime of our land, lie cauld in the clay,
* * * * * * * *
The Flowers of the Forest are a' [all] wede away."

— See AITKIN'S *Scottish Song*.

The editor is indebted for this reference and for a number of others to Mr. Thomas Davidson, of New York City.

[2] **Font**: the stone basin described in lines 922–926.

[3] **Springlet**: a little spring.

For thence may best his curious eye
The memorable field descry;
  And shepherd boys repair[1]
To seek the water-flag and rush,
And rest them by the hazel bush,
  And plait their garlands fair.
Nor dream they sit upon the grave
That holds the bones of Marmion brave. —
When thou shalt find the little hill,
With thy heart commune and be still.
If ever in temptation strong
Thou left'st the right path for the wrong,
If every devious step thus trod
Still led thee further from the road,
Dread thou to speak presumptuous doom
On noble Marmion's lowly tomb;
But say, 'He died a gallant knight,
With sword in hand, for England's right.'

XXXVIII.

I do not rhyme to that dull elf[2]
Who cannot image to himself
That all through Flodden's dismal night
Wilton was foremost in the fight,
That when brave Surrey's steed was slain
'Twas Wilton mounted him again;
'Twas Wilton's brand that deepest hewed
Amid the spearmen's stubborn wood:[3]

[1] **Repair**: go often or habitually.
[2] **Elf**: here simpleton, dolt.
[3] **Spearmen's stubborn wood**: see note on "Wood," p. 264.

Unnamed by Holinshed or Hall,[1]
He was the living soul of all;
That, after fight, his faith made plain,
He won his rank and lands again,
And charged [2] his old paternal shield
With bearings [3] won on Flodden Field.
Nor sing I to that simple maid
To whom it must in terms be said
That king and kinsmen did agree
To bless fair Clara's constancy;
Who cannot, unless I relate,
Paint to her mind the bridal's state, —
That Wolsey's [4] voice the blessing spoke.
More, Sands, and Denny,[5] passed the joke;
That bluff King Hal [6] the curtain drew,[7]
And Katherine's [8] hand the stocking threw;[9]

[1] **Holinshed or Hall**: writers of historical chronicles in the sixteenth century; Shakespeare made great use of these chronicles in his historical plays.

[2] **Charged**: to charge a shield is to put certain bearings on it.

[3] **Bearings**: heraldic devices used in coats-of-arms.

[4] **Wolsey**: Cardinal Wolsey.

[5] **More, Sands, and Denny**: Sir Thomas More succeeded Wolsey as Lord Chancellor; he was beheaded by Henry VIII. Lord Sands and Anthony Denny (see Shakespeare's *Henry VIII.*).

[6] **King Hal**: King Henry VIII.

[7] **Curtain drew**: the curtain of the bridal bed.

[8] **Katherine**: Queen Katherine, first wife of Henry VIII.

[9] **Stocking threw**: to throw the stocking at the bride or bridegroom was an old English custom. It appears to have originated in the belief expressed in the following lines: —

> "Th' intent of flinging thus the hose
> Is to hit him or her o' th' nose;
> Who hits the mark thus o'er left shoulder,
> Must married be ere twelve months older."
>
> — See BRANDE'S *Popular Antiquities*, II., 172.

But compare Brewer's *Reader's Handbook*, "Saints for Classes" (Brides).

And afterwards, for many a day,
That it was held enough to say,
In blessing to a wedded pair,
'Love they[1] like Wilton and like Clare!'

[1] **Love they**: may they love.

L'Envoy.[1]

TO THE READER.

WHY then a final note prolong,
Or lengthen out a closing song,
Unless to bid the gentles speed,
Who long have listed to my rede?[2]
To statesmen grave, if such may deign
To read the minstrel's idle strain,
Sound head, clean hand, and piercing wit,
And patriotic heart — as PITT!
A garland for the hero's crest,
And twined by her he loves the best!
To every lovely lady bright,
What can I wish but faithful knight?
To every faithful lover too,
What can I wish but lady true?
And knowledge to the studious sage,
And pillow soft to head of age!
To thee, dear school-boy, whom my lay
Has cheated of thy hour of play,
Light task and merry holiday!
To all, to each, a fair good-night,
And pleasing dreams, and slumbers light!

[1] **L'Envoy**: from Old French *envoy*, literally a message; here a closing word or postscript to enforce or recommend the poem.

[2] **Rede**: here story.

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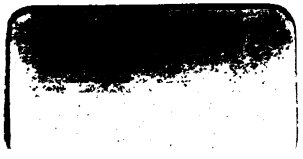
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